BANK HOLIDAY NUMBER.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 492. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 4TH, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

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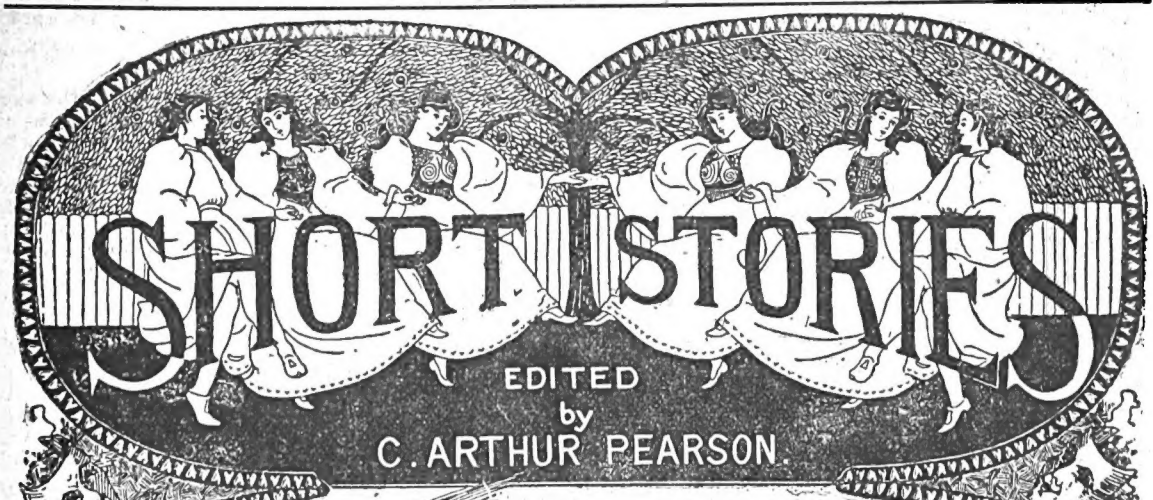

No. 492.] [ONE PENNY.
For the Week ending June 4th, 1898.

A NIGHT'S SERVICE.

AFTER Sir Lucius had won my horse and my sword there was naught left me to send after them, so I sat playing with my dice box and studying the black shadow of the table on the floor and the carved legs of my companion's chair; I did not care to look him in the face.

I heard the click of the bottle against the glass as he filled another bumper, and the rustle of his garments as he settled back in his chair; then, after an instant's dead stillness, in which I knew he was watching me, he spoke out gently:

"No need to be down-hearted, Wat."

"Not for you," I replied rather savagely.

"Come, come, take it not so seriously," he answered with a kindness that, added to the Spanish wine that had gone to my head and the hopeless feeling of desolation that was griping at my heart, made me forget for the moment to distrust him. "You've those tough young sinews of yours still left."

"Yes; I might turn ditcher for my living," I retorted.

"No, no; you misread my meaning. You've still the strength in your body left to set against my goods."

I glanced up quickly, but he was snuffing the candle just then, so only shadows fell on his face and I could not read his look.

"Say, now," he went on, "we throw once more; I stake the horse and sword I had of you; you stake twelve hours' service with them for to-morrow night—no, for to-night," he corrected, as he pointed to the window, where through the stripped branches of the trees that pressed close to Adlingstead we could see the dun eastern sky with a grey slit across it.

"All one to me," I replied. I threw and lost, just as I had lost during all that sitting. Then I pushed back my chair and left the room, shutting the door quickly, so I might not hear Sir Lucius' courteous, "Till to-night then."

* * * * *

There was distant kinship betwixt Sir Lucius Ingram and myself, sufficient to enable me to accept of a plate at his table and a bed under his roof, now that the failure of His Majesty's plans had left me a lieutenant with neither company or hire, yet not sufficient to make him yield such hospitality generously.

Hardly a friendly word had I had of him, save when we were at dice, the whole three days I had spent at Adlingstead, so it made me more uneasy to find him so civil the afternoon succeeding the game just referred to, and I began to fear he had some serious service to ask of me.

It was a relief when, towards mid-afternoon, he bade me follow him out through the western door into the

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lower end of the garden and so, by the postern gate, into the lane, where stood my horse, the Don. At the sight of him I knew we should soon come to business.

Sure enough, Sir Lucius spoke out at once:

"You know the way to Frith?"

"Old Henry Mayeson's estate?" I queried. "Surely." And in the relief in discovering the service was not likely to be a midnight assassination, which, as I knew Sir Lucius' temper, I had rather feared. I turned to the Don and began rubbing his black nose. The old fellow pressed his nose against the front of my jacket and whinnied softly, till my heart smote me that I could have thrown him away, and to Sir Lucius, of all men.

"Then perchance," went on Sir Lucius, with his cold eyes on my face, "you may have heard of Sir Henry Mayeson's heiress, Mistress Cordelia Mayeson?"

"Why," I blurted out, "that is the gentlewoman whom you——" I had the wit to bite down on my tongue there. 'Tis poor policy to remind a rejected suitor of his failure.

"Exactly," replied Sir Lucius, with a flicker of a smile on his thin lips. "And she is the gentlewoman you must make shift to bring hither to-night."

I ripped out an oath at that, but he held up one hand and went on as if I had not spoken.

"Ride at once to Frith. Tell Mistress Mayeson that Master Fulford, her guardian, lieth ill at Stowbury—so he doth, of the gout—you shall say 'tis a fever, or what you will. Only see that with her ready and dutiful affection my mistress doth dispatch at once to his side, under your escort, my honest-faced gentleman. And you shall lose your way and stray hither."

"I shall do nothing of the sort," I choked out. I think I should have knocked him down, only he was such a puny little wretch I was loath to strike him. "Why, 'tis infamous!"

Sir Lucius waited till I had done storming, then said:

"'Tis no great harm the wench will suffer in being wedded to a man of her own rank. And I entertain an affection for her. For her estate, too, you would say, Master Wat? Well, well, her lands detract nothing from her personal charms; but, be that as it may, 'tis my purpose to make her my wife, and, with your aid, I shall bring it to pass ere the week is out."

I fumbled at the Don's reins a moment, then muttered:

"But if she does not incline thereto, I want no hand in the matter."

"You passed your word," said Sir Lucius coldly. "I have ever held you a gentleman of honour, Walter Staplegate."

"If you call me otherwise," I retorted, with my hand on my hilt.

"Ah! The sword you wear on suffrance;" he replied. "Never mind, Wattie, bring the girl hither this even', and you shall have your cutting tool and your evil-tempered horse, all in free gift."

Then he turned his back in dismissal, and swinging into my saddle I rode away down the lane.

I went slowly at first, for I had no great liking for an errand such as this, but after I got out into the road to Frith and the Don fell into his good, smooth trot, I got to looking at it in a pleasanter light; for, after all, Sir Lucius would but marry a foolish girl, who, like enough, knew not her own mind. And then, too, I should win back my old Don by the practice. So putting Mistress Cordelia Mayeson quite out of my head, I rode forward happily, with the wind in my face and the sun low on my left hand, so that a long, black shadow trotted at my side.

Shadows had all blended in the dull grey of the early twilight when I drew rein in the courtyard of the old manor house at Frith. I gave a sleek serving man the message Sir Lucius had given me—'twas no lie of mine—then dismounted and paced up and down the flagged walk by the side of the house to stretch my legs. I was just beginning to make friends with a great hound who was loitering there when a girl came running along the walk towards me, a slip of a lass in a grey riding cloak, whom I judged to be Mistress Mayeson.

"Tell me, is it a mortal illness?" she cried.

I had to bethink an instant ere I could recollect who was ill, but she ran on without heeding me.

"And he sent you? Did you speak with him? He wishes to see me? Oh, why doth not Jock hasten with the horses! Poor Master Fulford!"

Then she seemed to put an inward control on herself, for she bit her lips, that trembled never so little, and stood tearing at her gloves a moment and adjusting the fastening of her cloak, ere she lifted her eyes to my face. Her voice was quite calm when she spoke again.

"You are his messenger? I never yet met you, sir."

Happily at that moment up came Jock with her horse and one that bore a man's saddle.

The clumsy fool would have assisted her, but I pushed him aside, and put her into her saddle, all spring and alertness she was, like a squirrel. Scarce seated she was out of the court on the canter, and master Jock and I plodded after her.

It was while we rode thus knee to knee I turned on him, and showing him my pistol by way of argument, bade him ride back whence he came.

"And tell the people at the house," I added, for I had no wish to go sneaking away like a thief, "that I am running away with their mistress."

He scuttled for home as fast as his fat cob would carry him, and I rode on after my young lady. It seemed just as well to keep in her rear and not risk being questioned till we reached the fork where the cross road to Adlingstead branches off from the Stowbury road; but there I came up with her, and clapping one hand on her bridle, turned her steed into the cross road.

Her head was thrown back at once and she gazed up at me, half amazed, half indignant, with a blank:

"What mean you, sir?"

"We are going to Adlingstead," I replied, looking at her head.

I had meant to tell her the truth and have done with it, but I did not want to see her cry.

"This hath all been a trick and we are now bound for Sir Lucius Ingram's house. You are going to marry him."

"Indeed?" she queried.

I could feel the scorn that bit each syllable, but I did not meet her eyes.

Next moment she brought her whip down on her horse's flank and made an effort to dash by me into the Stowbury road.

I caught her rein, and on the instant the whip came slash across my face, three stinging cuts that I, with one hand on her bridle, the other steadying the Don, could not ward off; not till we were pacing along the Adlingstead road could I get an arm free and mop the blood from my face.

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"That was cowardly done," I burst out involuntarily, still tingling with the shame of such punishment.

"Verily, you have the right to look for generous treatment at the hands of everyone," Mistress Mayeson replied, with an accent that cut worse than her whip lash. She had turned her head and was gazing at me as we rode, but I kept my eyes on the Don's ears, and only retorted sullenly in what poor defence I had at hand:

"Say that to Sir Lucius; I like not this task myself; I do it, but at his command."

"You are Sir Lucius' bondman, then?" she went on. "Prithee, tell me, do you clean his boots, and groom his horses, too?"

"I am as good a gentleman as Sir Lucius," I said sullenly. I had been ready to bear with her crying and be very patient, and good-tempered, but I had not looked for a gentlewoman to rail at me in this unseemly fashion.

"No better?" she asked. "Then you must be the basest of the base."

"I would you were a man!"

I swung round in my saddle and faced her then; I could not make out her features in the twilight, but I could feel her eyes upon me.

"Nay; do not wish that," she said, with a little dry laugh. "If I were, you know well you never durst touch me."

"You mistake, Mistress," I retorted, trying to meet coolness with coolness. "I would seek a meeting with all the swordsmen you can send against me. Indeed, I bade your groom rouse your people to pursue. We shall have good fighting ere the night be over."

"I thank you for your courtesy," she said quietly, and then we went on in silence for a time.

The hunters' moon came up on our left, and the sheen of its clear light lay over the stubbles of the harvested fields. I could see Mistress Mayeson's face when I ventured to glance sidewise at her; very quiet and white she looked, and her eyes, under the shadow of her hood, were black.

"Your kindness will avail little, though," she resumed presently, as if she had never ceased speaking. "Think you that those who care only for the food and garments I give them will risk crossing swords with such as you on my behalf?"

"They are vile wretches else," I said. "Were I in your service——" Then I bit off the words and added coolly: "If they do not come, 'twill prove a dull evening for me."

Her eyebrows arched up at that, but she replied restrained enough: "If you sought an encounter, you should have seized upon a maid who had a father and brothers. There is no one to protect me, you see, only paid servants, for good Master Fulford is too aged to stand against such as you."

I twisted the ends of my reins into a fine knot and prayed that she might begin crying soon, for then I should know what to do. At present I felt like the meanest hound on the face of the earth.

"But hitherto," she went on, "I have found that, because I have no defender, all gentlemen felt bound in honour to protect me."

"Let me pass, then, for no gentleman," I said, turning towards her with an effort at surliness.

"Why, your face is bleeding!" she cried, in a very honest surprise.

"Yes," I muttered rubbing my sleeve across the cut.

I felt her hand brush against my arm.

"Here, take my handkerchief," she begged. "Did I do that to you, and you only Sir Lucius's poor tool? Indeed I am so sorry I hurt you, Master Bondman."

"My name is Staplegate," I said, trying to be fierce and sullen, and throughout despising myself more even than I had ever despised Sir Lucius.

"Not Master John Staplegate's son?" she asked blankly, and then half to herself. "Verily, that honourable gentleman would be proud to own you!"

"Let the dead be," I meant to threaten and ended by pleading. "And as for this accursed work, I had never undertaken it, did not honour constrain me."

"Your honour constrained you to misuse a woman?" she asked. "I would you were less honourable and more honest."

"I had pledged my word," I said, and then I told her truthfully all that had passed between myself and Sir Lucius. I kept my eyes on the Don's black shoulders, and the white moonlit road beyond while I spoke, but though I did not see I felt the scorn in her whole face and voice as she commented:

"So you staked my happiness, me, on the throw of the dice?"

"I knew not what 'twas a question of," I said humbly, "and I was near willing to risk my soul to win back the Don. He is too good a steed to be left to such a fellow as Lucius."

"Look at me, Master Staplegate."

But I did not meet her eyes, only took a shamefaced glance at her white throat and round little chin.

"Am I so less worthy than your horse that I should be committed to such a man as the one you name?"

"I am the veriest hangdog," I acknowledged. "I wish you would say outright that you would like to see me flogged at the cart's tail."

"But I should not like to," she said gently. "Your being hurt would not help me."

"I cannot break my word," I muttered.

"Surely not," she assented gravely.

"But I might do this, if you bid," I resumed after a time, in desperation, for on the next hill top I could see the leafless trees and the roof of Adlingstead gleaming in the white moonlight. "Shoot me, and you can ride back to Frith. After I am dead dishonour doth not matter to me."

I looked Mistress Mayeson in the face as I spoke, and I saw her lips quiver and twitch, and then, of a sudden she broke out into a clear peal of laughter that brought the blood burning to my face.

"I offered it but to help you," I said sulkily.

"I crave your pardon, good Master Staplegate," she said very honestly, holding out her hand; she had reined in her horse and I halted, too, at her side. "But indeed—" her lips quivered with laughter again—"I was not prepared for so gallant a remedy. And 'twould be a pity for so honourable a gentleman as you to throw his life away, when I think I can myself find an easier path out of the difficulty."

She sat a moment rubbing the stock of her whip across her lips, and finally she looked at me with her eyes gleaming.

"I have it, Master Staplegate, such an excellent and honourable scheme. Let me whisper it to you."

She bent from her saddle and for an instant the edge of her hood near grazed my cheek; then she sat erect again and smiled at me.

"You have it?"

"Safely," I replied, and daring to look in her face

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now I noted the dark curls that strayed from beneath her hood across her forehead and the bright flush that was on her cheeks.

Then we put the horses forward briskly for the little that was left of the journey, till we drew rein outside the postern gate at Adlingstead. I lifted Mistress Mayeson from her saddle, and, having slipped the bridle reins over the fork of a tree so that they might easily be cast loose, I held out my hand to her.

"You dare trust me still?" I asked, watching her face.

"Aye, Master Staplegate," she replied, laying her little hand firmly in mine, and then, with eyes twinkling:

"I knew from the first you would never do this thing."

I might digest that as best I could, for there was no space to reply before she had drawn me along to the half-open gate as we entered the garden.

The wall made a black shadow all along its length, and the clumps of bushes had thick shadows at their feet, but out in the open, where the path ran up to the house, all was clear, gleaming whiteness.

On the steps by the open door stood Sir Lucius in his best velvet doublet. 'Twas so bright I could even see he had on his most courteous smile.

"I shall not fail you now," I said under my breath to the girl.

For answer I felt her fingers press tighter upon my hand.

"Welcome to Adlingstead, sweet Mistress Mayeson," said Sir Lucius, descending the steps: and he made a movement to kiss her hand, but quick as a flash she clasped both her hands about my arm.

He looked a bit disconcerted thereat and said curtly:

"You may go, Wat."

"Then my task is done?" I queried, mastering myself, though my blood was boiling at being thus ordered about like the meanest lackey.

"Yes, yes."

"The service I pledged myself to?"

"Yes."

"And the Don——"

"Take your sword and your horse and go."

"Good even then," I said curtly, and turned on the word, and Mistress Mayeson with me.

"Not so fast," cried Sir Lucius, stepping in front of us.

"'Twas not in the bargain that Mistress Mayeson should stay at Adlingstead," I explained courteously. "You bade me only bring her hither. I have done what I was pledged to do, and now she wisheth me to escort her to Stowbury."

For once he let his civility drop.

"You'll trick me, you cursed beggar, you rascallion!" he cried. "Here, Giles, Nicholas, out with you!"

"Run for the horses," I said to Mistress Mayeson, for I could hear the grooms stamping down the corridor within. Sir Lucius seized her by the wrist, and at that I let go remembrance of such benefits as he had hitherto shown me, and catching him by the scruff of the neck I struck him in the face. I meant not to hurt him, but I fear I struck harder than I thought, for when I released him he went down all of a heap by the steps and lay there groaning.

By that the two grooms were upon me with their staves, and had me at a disadvantage, for I scrupled to use my sword on such churls. For an instant I made good havoc with my fists, and then, wrenching the staff from Giles, laid him flat with a blow on the coxcomb; and beating off Nicholas, I got safe through the gate. Mistress Mayeson was sitting upright upon her horse with my bridle rein in her hand, so I had but to leap to my saddle and we were off, full gallop across the fields.

We had risked our necks over three hedges ere I felt we were in little danger of pursuit, and bade her slacken speed.

"So you have had some fighting after all, Master Staplegate," were her first words.

"Aye, but 'twas mere churl's work," I replied, rubbing my head that still ached from Nicholas' cudgel.

Just then Mistress Mayeson put her hand to her eyes and burst out crying, and, faith, I'd so little expected that of her that now I had clean forgot what to do, so I sat staring at her helplessly, till at last I ventured to query:

"Have I done aught amiss? Would you wish to go back——"

"Have you no wit at all, Master Staplegate?" she sobbed out.

"Then have I not done enough? Shall I ride back and kill Sir Lucius?"

"No, no," she said. Then with a laugh breaking through her sobs: "How droll he looked, just like a puppy, when you picked him up!"

Then she mastered herself once more, and as we rode on began furtively to wipe her eyes with her glove. So I took her kerchief from the breast of my jacket and held it out to her, "I did not use it," I said. "Here; but prithee, give it back to me again."

"Then there is something more in this world besides your horse and your sword that is precious to you?" she asked.

"Yes, now," I answered. And we went in silence the little way that was left.

It was not yet midnight when we rode into Stowbury; the moon still made the High Street light. We reined up before Master Fulford's great house, where candles were shining; perhaps tidings of Mistress Mayeson's flight had come thither, for the instant we halted, the door at the head of the stairs was flung open and the light from the candles, streaming out, merged with the moonbeams. Against the square of vivid yellow light that the doorway framed stood an old man, who, peering down at us, called:

"'Tis you, Cordelia? And safe?"

"Aye, sir," she cried, as I helped her from the saddle.

"God be with you, Mistress Mayeson," I whispered, for I had no wish to tarry and speak with Master Fulford.

"God be with you, too, Wat Staplegate," she said with her sweet face sober for a moment. "And may you ever keep your precious honour safe as to-night," she called down with a little laugh from half-way up the stairs. Then, as her form became clearly outlined against the candle light from within, she turned suddenly and threw me a kiss with her ungloved hand.

Next moment the door had closed, and I was left blinking with the light that had just gone out before my eyes.

BEULAH DIX.

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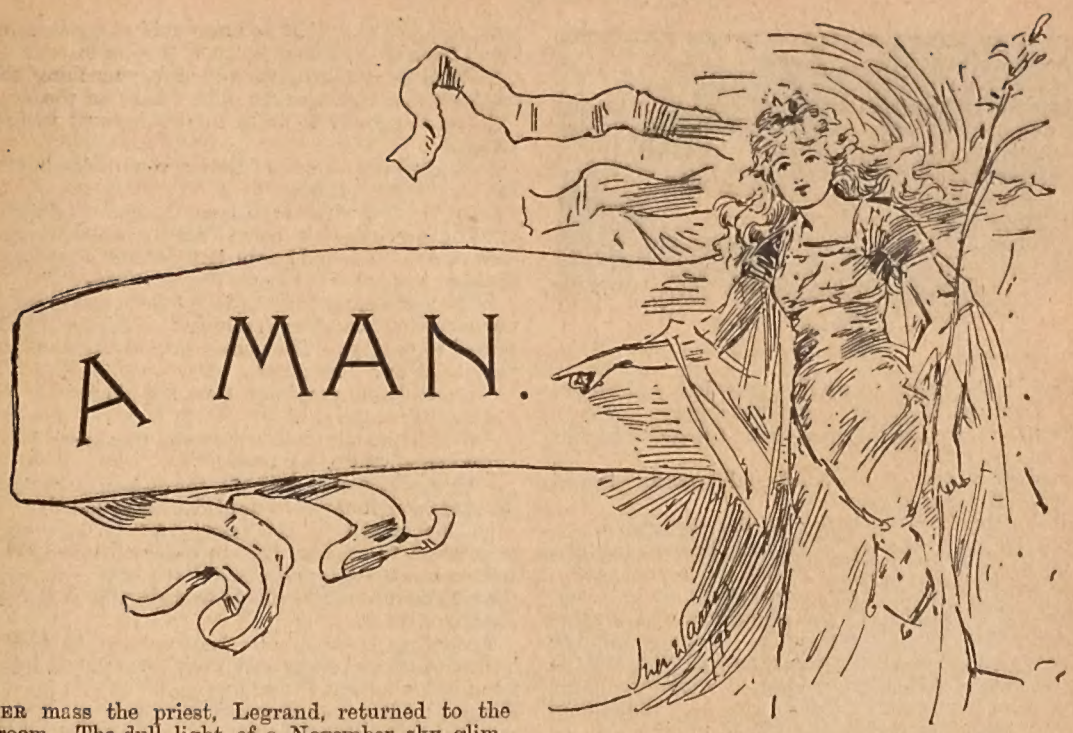
A MAN.



After mass the priest, Legrand, returned to the vestryroom. The dull light of a November sky glimmered through the panes of the only window. Out of the obscurity there arose a woman, a pitiful object, with her little kerchief knotted beneath her chin, her face bathed in tears. She threw herself at the feet of the priest, crying out: "They are going to shoot him!"

"Shoot him! Who?" asked the priest.

"The Prussians—my husband"—and a sob choked the unfortunate creature. Very much affected, the priest quickly set down his chalice on a table, and, taking the hands of the poor woman in his own, made her stand up.

"But how—your husband?"

"Yes, on account of the Uhlans that were killed yesterday by the sharpshooters. The Prussians have had lots drawn this morning, and three men are to be shot; Vincent, Laideur, and my husband. Save him, reverend sir!"

"But I can do nothing," replied the priest with a discouraging gesture, and then, his bowed head resting on his hands, he began to reflect. The thought of the misfortune that was about to befall his parishioners and his own inability to avert it grieved him deeply. Not to be able to meet them—his flock, for whom he spent himself unceasingly, devoted even to sacrifice. Should he allow her to depart thus, this weeping woman who had come to ask him for her husband? "I must save them at all cost," he said to himself; and turning to the woman, "Take courage," he said, "and hope."

Hastily he took off his priestly ornaments, and directed his steps to the Mayor's residence, where was installed the captain commanding a platoon of Uhlans sent as an advanced guard. The naturally pale face of the priest grew paler and paler as the road shortened. The idea of this formidable interview made him quiver with excitement, but his excitement banished his timidity. He was conducted into the council-room. Seated at a table, the captain was signing some papers. He looked the priest full in the face, and in order to anticipate a request that he dreaded, said in French in an abrupt manner:

"What do you want, sir?"

"I have come to ask pardon for the people of this village—they are innocent," stammered out the priest.

"War has terrible necessities," replied the captain. "Your sharpshooters kill a number of our men every day. We must have done with them. So much the worse for the villages that harbour them."

The priest tried to argue the matter, but all his reasons were shattered against the pitiless logic of the German officer. At length, convinced of his inability, he tried only to save one of his prisoners.

"Grant me at least the pardon of Leroy. He has three little children."

The captain showed some sign of pity; but, pointing to the table on which his papers lay, he said: "The orders are explicit. I would be untrue to my duty as a soldier. You ought to understand me, sir; you are a priest. Three of our Uhlans have been killed; we must have three victims."

Nothing was left for the priest to do but to depart; however, he did not stir. After a somewhat protracted silence, the captain raised his head from the papers with which he was busy, and snapped his fingers with a gesture of impatience. Suddenly the priest advanced, and, as if almost ashamed, he murmured:

"I have neither wife nor children. Will you accept me?"

The officer fixed his eyes upon the priest with a look of sympathy. After a moment's silence he said:

"This is a serious thing you ask of me. You are young yet. Think of it well."

"I beg you to grant it," said the priest.

Without replying, the captain began to write. Then he arose, and, holding out a sheet of paper, said:

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"Here is the order to set the man Leroy at liberty and put you in his place," and, in a grave tone, he added: "Reverend sir, will you do me the great honour to give me your hand?"

The priest extended his hand, and heartily clasped that of the German officer.

With a light step, so happy at the thought of his sacrifice that, regardless of his dignity, he was disposed to run, the priest rapidly reached the school where the condemned men were imprisoned. The commander of the guard, a Uhlan officer, trailed his sabre before the door with a great clank. Without deigning to answer the salute of the priest, he took roughly the sheet of paper; but, after reading it over, the harsh expression of his face grew softer. He drew himself up to his full height, and, raising his hand to his shako, he said respectfully:

"Will you please enter, sir?"

At the door of the school-room the priest begged the officer to summon Leroy, who, overwhelmed with grief, seized the hands of the priest, murmuring:

"My wife, my poor little ones."

"Courage, my friend," said the priest. "Do not lose hope."

With tact, he told his parishioner that he was pardoned on account of his family. The man began to laugh and dance, almost beside himself. He wanted to run home immediately, but the priest succeeded in calming him, and at length they both set out on the road to his house. Near a gate the priest said:

"Remain here. I am going to inform your wife."

She, surrounded by her children, whose merry voices were now hushed, was sadly working in her humble cottage; but the beaming face of the priest as he approached announced the joyful news.

"He is free!"

Without replying, the priest smiled.

"He is coming," and husband and wife were in each other's arms in silent joy.

"We have not thanked you," said the man at last.

The priest, very much moved, replied: "Your happiness is my reward." He clasped the hands of the husband and wife, kissed the children and hastened to return to the school. In a corner of the school-room the forest-keeper, Laideur, a veteran of the Italian and Crimean campaigns, gloomy, his arms crossed, stoically smoked his pipe. Near him, Vincent, a young man about eighteen years of age, his head resting on his hands, seemed to sleep.

The priest sat down between the two prisoners. His exhortations and his encouragements made the young man sob; Laideur swore. The priest took each by the arm, and, knowing that no one would communicate with them, he said to them:

"We must stand together by-and-bye. You, Laideur, must set us an example, an old soldier like you."

"You are going to be with us?" asked the forest-keeper.

"Yes, indeed, instead of Leroy, you understand. He has a wife and children."

Carried away with enthusiasm, Laideur exclaimed:

"You are indeed a hero! Surely, we will stand by each other. If I could only have killed a few more of those cock-sparrows, but my rheumatism——"

With a smile, the priest calmed the excitement of the worthy fellow, and then, turning to Vincent, asked if he wished to confess. The young man consented. "And you, Laideur?" he asked.

"Oh, as to me, you know I am not pious."

"Do it for my sake."

"Well, now, would that give you pleasure?"

"Much pleasure, my friend."

"Very well then," said the forest-keeper, pulling up his sleeves as if about to unload a heavy burden.

On his return to his vestry—for he had obtained permission to remain free in order to make his final arrangements—the priest asked the sexton to summon the inhabitants of the village to meet him at the church at three o'clock.

According to habit, after his breakfast, he took some bits of bread and sugar and went into the inclosure in front of his house. On catching sight of him his donkey stopped feeding and advanced towards him. The priest put his arms round her neck, and with the palm of his hand stroked her velvety nostrils, repeating: "My good beast! My good beast!"

His tenderness was extended to all the animals, companions of his solitude, and these, rendered gentle by his great kindness, offered themselves to his caresses. Meantime the donkey had freed her head and walked round her master, snuffing the air, and then began to bray.

"Greedy one, is that what you want?" said the priest, drawing out from his cassock a piece of bread.

Sounds of clucking and flapping of wings now claimed his attention. He stopped, and cocks and hens came to peck from his hands. His rabbits were not forgotten, either. While giving them some bran he slowly passed his hand through the fur of their rounded backs. As his donkey had followed him he handed her a bit of sugar, and the beast began to munch it, shaking her ears with visible satisfaction. Her round and gentle eyes seemed to regard her master tenderly. The priest felt a cold chill pass through his frame, and, with bowed head, his hands behind his back, he went into his garden.

In the midst of the squares of earth glittered the clean gravel walks. The leafless pear trees stretched their arms, covered with straw, in parallel lines along the wall. The priest fastened up a loosened branch with a bit of osier, and dreamily continued his walk in the bright sunshine along the garden wall. Pausing at length, he opened a little door looking out on the fields.

Silent, bathed in light and moisture, the plain stretched far away. In places, stacks of wheat, rounded like dovecots, or similar to little houses, formed hamlets of straw. To the left, a forest of beech trees joined the pine wood, which barred the horizon. For a long time the priest fixed his eyes on this familiar landscape, as if to imprint it upon them; then he closed the door. But his look, passing above the walls, stopped at the

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church clock. The short hand was between one and two, the other had passed over the half of the dial-plate.

"In three hours I will be dead," thought he, and instinctively he crossed his arms over his breast as if to protect it against the bullets. Three hours longer and he would be nothing more than a lifeless body, nailed up in his coffin. In his morbid imagination, he seemed to hear the dull thud of the first spadeful of earth upon the wood.

To die thus, in full health, in the vigour of life, was this possible? How many simple pleasures in his happy life, without desires and without ambitions; the duties of his priesthood, the alleviation of the poor and suffering, the intercourse with his brethren, the care of his animals and of his garden. Ah! why had he committed this folly of offering himself as a sacrifice? Distracted with anguish, he sprang with a bound to the gate and opened it abruptly! His look followed the grassy path that led from the foot of the wall, and winding between the ploughed fields, joined the road. In thought he hastened along this road, dashed through the forest into well-known paths; yonder, some miles away, was a railway station.

The priest bent his head forward in anxious gaze. The plain was deserted as far as the horizon; no one would see him flee. He would reach the station, take the train, and go far, far away; would be free, would live, would live!

Maddened, he was about to rush forward, bare-headed; but his word of honour—but Leroy.

With a sob, he closed the gate, and, kneeling, he called to his aid, with all the strength of his faith, that Saviour who, at the approach of death, had experienced in the garden on the Mount of Olives all its terrors, all its agonies—dying as it were, in advance. He besought Him to aid him to the end, and restore to him his fortitude. Then, with renewed strength, and recognising that solitude and reveries induced weakness, he hastened back to his house. His accounts made out exactly, his little property classified and valued, he made his will, leaving small sums to the most needy of his parishioners, and little souvenirs to others. Finally, he bequeathed his donkey to a wealthy family, with the request that they would never sell her, and thus spare her from spending her last days in misery, dragging along the roads the cart of some pedlar.

Having completed these arrangements, he passed a long time in fervid prayer, asking pardon for his faults and relying wholly on the mercy and justice of God.

As the clock struck three the priest descended the stairway of his house and proceeded to the church.

This was as full as on days of high festival. In the presence of the misfortune that was about to fall upon the village, even the most thoughtless had come to assemble about the man who represented the highest moral authority. In his surplice the priest passed through the crowd of worshippers, and, ascending the pulpit steps, after a few moments of meditation, he said:

"My brethren, I am very glad to see you gathered here in such great numbers. The authorities have been pleased to grant me the pardon of Leroy; but I have not been able to obtain that of Laideur and Vincent. I have seen them and comforted them. They are ready to die as Frenchmen and as Christians."

Without fine phrases, but with perfect simplicity, he spoke of duty, self-sacrifice, and love of country. His words sent a thrill through this assembly, whose ideal was ordinarily confined to material interests.

Turning towards the altar, he intoned in a firm voice, the *De Profundis*. Then he gave his blessing to the congregation, praying for patience and resignation, and requesting each one to return to his home and there remain. Leaving the church, he was seen to direct his steps to the school.

The next morning the inhabitants of the village learnt that their priest had been shot by the Prussians.

MAURICE LEMERCIER.

M. A. P.

EVERYBODY has heard of Mr. T. P. O'Connor. Many people know him as an Irishman, many as an M.P., and many again as the most brilliant journalist living. He founded *The Star*, he established *The Sun*, and by them made possible the halfpenny daily paper as exemplified in *The Daily Mail*, *The Leader*, *The Morning*, and others in the Provinces.

Amongst the various good and bad qualities incidental to T.P.'s nature it is, however, not so well known that he is on the friendliest terms with more well-known people than most men, that he is a capital after-dinner speaker, with an exhaustless fund of anecdote and humour, that he is to be found at every social gathering of distinction in London, and that, therefore, he ought to be, if he could only be induced to be, a perfect editor of a Society paper. This latter thought seems to have occurred to T.P. For some months past he has been laying his plans to bring out a paper which without doubt should become the most interesting ever published.

It will be remembered that in the early days of T.P.'s journalistic career, when he started *The Star*, the most noticeable feature in that then most noticeable paper was the column headed "Mainly About People." Before that time no journalist had been bold enough to exploit the personal par and tell us what famous people were doing in their leisure hours, in their houses, and the hundred and one things we now hear about them. It was in that column, too, that T.P. proved that, brilliant as he was as a literary critic, slashing as a political leader-writer, he was at his best in drawing a pen portrait of a man or a woman; in describing the one or the other, from the innermost beats of their hearts to the cut of the coat or the colour of the frock.

This feature in modern journalism was, as I say, initiated by Mr. O'Connor, and he now intends to enlarge upon it by editing a paper to be called "M.A.P.," which means "Mainly About People." It will be published from the Offices of *Pearson's Weekly*, every Thursday, at the price of One Penny.

It is not advisable at the present moment to give away too many of the distinctive features of "M.A.P.," but one or two may be revealed. First, the paper will be entirely non-political and non-sectarian. There will not be a line that is not personal, and yet there will not be a line that is not pleasant. The reader will not have to tear off its cover, or to leave it behind in the railway train, or to hide it from the boy or the maid; and the husband who does not bring it home to his wife will have to face a clouded brow and a divided household. Influential people in every branch of life have given Mr. O'Connor interviews, articles from their pens, and information generally that would never see the light of day except it were given to the friend as apart from the journalist.

ASK FOR THE FIRST NUMBER OF

M. A. P.

∴ ON THURSDAY, JUNE 16th. ∴

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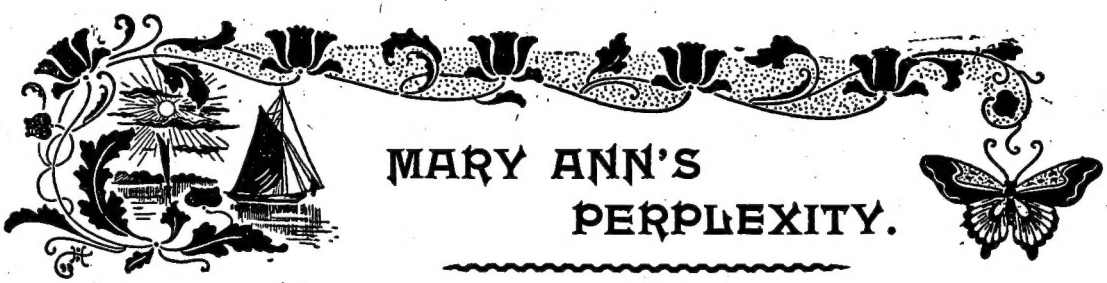

MARY ANN'S PERPLEXITY.

Mary Ann Davis was in sore perplexity.

In the first place, her bread had refused to rise, for almost the first time in her experience as a housekeeper, and on the following day the minister was coming to tea.

And in the next place, Mr. Popham, the grocer, had proposed to her.

He had already proposed to, married and buried, three estimable women.

Mary Ann lived in the square white house which had been her father's, with no companions but her cat and the old man who took care of the garden. One after another of her family had gone away never to come back, and the old house had grown silent and lonely as the changes went on; but Mary Ann was attached to the place, and it seemed to her that nowhere in the world did the sun shine brighter and warmer than it shone into the windows of the old house.

Mary Ann had been a pretty girl, and though she was now past forty, her hair was still soft and abundant, and lay against her white, wrinkled forehead in little golden crinkles, and the bloom on her cheeks were still delicate and dainty.

The time had been, and it was not so far distant either, when the people of Harden had fully expected and believed that Mary Ann Davis and James Meader would be made one, and live out their quiet and uneventful lives side by side, as the majority of Harden people had done before them.

James was "well-to-do," and the Meader farm was one of the best in the country. James fully sustained the family reputation in this respect. But time went on and he still continued single; and it "really did seem that he didn't get on one mite with his courtship," so the wise women of Harden said as they talked the matter over.

The Meaders were notoriously slow people, and if James had any designs on the heart of Mary Ann Davis, he probably thought that there was time enough. "No use to be in a hurry," was the motto which should have been inscribed on the family coat of arms of the Meaders.

Mary Ann herself had not been without some expectations in that direction, but it had been so long about, and nothing had come of it, that she had practically given up the idea.

James had a practice of coming over to her house regularly every other Tuesday evening, and staying until nine o'clock, never later. His conversation was mainly about the weather, past and present—the meetings at the school-house and the crops round about Harden.

And whenever he came, after he had seated himself in the chintz-covered chair and stroked the cat's back, he took out his pocket-book and extracted therefrom a large blue envelope which seemed to contain something bulky. He would hold it in his hand, feel it as if to make sure that nothing had been lost out of it, and then return it to his pocket, and he always sighed when he put it away,

This performance had become so much a matter of course that Mary Ann had ceased to wonder at it, or to feel any curiosity in respect to it.

But now, as stated in the beginning, Mary Ann was in sore perplexity.

As troubles never come singly, so in the midst of this perplexity about the bread, Mr. Popham's proposal had come suddenly into the contentment of Mary Ann's life. The idea that she might be considered eligible to the position of Mrs. Popham No. 4., had never flashed across Mary Ann's mind.

"Goodness me!" said she, "you could have knocked me down with a feather when he said: 'Miss Davis, the life of a widowed man is very lonely, and I want someone to help me to look after my business. Will you be Mrs. Popham?'"

And this was how affairs stood at the time we introduce Mary Ann to our readers. She had given a great deal of time and thought to the grocer's proposal, and suddenly it flashed across her that in all troubles and perplexities, people generally applied to their minister for advice.

And how providential it was that the Rev. John Tuttle was coming to tea! Mary Ann did the best she could with the bread, and resolved to confide in Mr. Tuttle.

So when they were comfortably seated at the table and the minister had done ample justice to the cake, and was busy with his mince pie, Mary Ann told the reverend gentleman that Mr. Popham had proposed to her.

The food was excellent, and the minister passed up his plate for a second helping before he replied.

"Well, Miss Davis, our neighbour is an exemplary man, but the question at issue is, do you love him well enough to promise to honour and obey him until death does you part?"

"I—I'm afraid I don't, Mr. Tuttle."

"I tell you what, Miss Davis," said the minister, after a pause, no doubt inspired by the pie, "let you and I join ourselves in wedlock, and that will be answer enough for the grocer."

"Oh, good gracious, Mr. Tuttle!" cried Mary Ann, feeling, as she afterwards said, as if she should sink down into her boots.

The minister pressed his suit with ardour, and so a third perplexity came into Mary Ann's life. But it was finally decided that should have a week to consider: it was now Wednesday, and as the grocer was coming for his answer on Wednesday week she appointed Thursday for the minister.

As the days went on, Mary Ann's perplexity increased.

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She was no nearer a decision than she had been at first. However, she decided she would offend one.

Right in the midst of it Tuesday came round again, and James Meader dropped in to make his usual call. Being shown into the parlour and duly installed in the armchair, he stroked the back of the cat, hemmed and cleared his throat, then took out his pocket-book and examined the blue envelope. Then he sighed and returned it to his pocket.

Mary Ann fidgeted about, upset a pot of geraniums, and knocked down James' best hat which he had placed carefully on the cover of the sewing machine, and when she should have said "yes" she said "no," and when she should have said "No" she said "Yes."

"Mary Ann," said he at length, with an effort, "Mary Ann!"

"Well, Mr. Meader?"

"Something or other seems to trouble you."

"Yes. There is something," said Mary Ann, feeling the sentences jerked out of her by some influence she could not resist. "I am awfully bothered. I was never so upset and perplexed in my mortal life. Never!"

"Why, Mary Ann? Is it about the cows, or—."

"It isn't anything of that kind," said Mary Ann tartly; "you see the fact of it is, James, I have had two proposals of marriage."

"What!" ejaculated James, rising slowly in his surprise, "not two from one man?"

"No, two from two men."

"Great goodness, Mary Ann, what men are they?"

"Mr. Popham and the minister."

James began smoothing the back of the cat in deep thought.

Then he took out his pocket-book and produced the blue envelope, felt it, replaced it in the pocket-book and sighed.

"What are you going to do about it, Mary Ann?"

"I don't know," said Mary Ann, nervously plaiting and unplaiting the hem of her white apron, "if I have the minister the other will be put out, and if I have Popham, the minister will be put out."

"Well, yes, that stands to reason," said James, feeling the pocket-book where the blue envelope was lying, and evidently resisting the impulse to draw it forth again.

"I'm in a dreadful fix," said Mary Ann, "for you see this is Tuesday, and Mr. Popham is to come for his answer on Wednesday, and the minister is to come for his on Thursday."

"My goodness!" said James, rising to the occasion, "there is only one way out of it; I'll come for my answer on Tuesday, which is to-day," and James put his arm round Mary Ann's waist—a little shyly at first, but growing bolder as he got used to it.

"Why, James Meader!" cried Mary Ann.

"It isn't any use to put it off," said James, drawing her nearer as he became accustomed to the situation. "I've been coming here quite a long time, Mary Ann, but I never felt as if it was best to hurry. Marry in haste and repent at leisure, you know."

"Oh, my! This is so sudden," said Mary Ann. "I don't know as I shall ever get used to it."

"Yes, you will," said James warmly; "I'm getting used to it already. My goodness, Mary Ann, the more I think of it the more I'm convinced that I've been a fool for putting it off for so long! But I always was a leetle bit slow. And I wanted to have a window cut in the back-kitchen and the water put into the sink before I asked you. But I'll see to it as I go home. Great goodness, Mary Ann, I come pretty nigh losing you!"

And suddenly releasing Mary Ann, he produced his pocket-book and took a hasty squint at the blue envelope.

"James," said Mary Ann, "before this goes any further I want to ask you what is in the envelope. I've seen you take it out over and over again, and I've got to know what is in it before I decide between the grocer, the minister, and you."

James looked a little abashed, but he opened the envelope, and there, tied by a faded blue ribbon, was a lock of yellow hair—the hair of a child—and written on the worn piece of paper which inclosed the hair were these lines:

If you love me as I love you,
No knife can cut our love in two.

Tears came to Mary Ann's eyes, and she drew close to the side of her old lover.

"Why, James!" she exclaimed, "who'd ever have thought of keeping that?"

"I did. Yes, Mary Ann, that's the little lock of hair you cut off from your head and gave me when you were ten year old and was agoin' to spend the winter with your Aunt Nancy. I always carry it with me for fear the house might catch fire and it would get burnt up. And shall it be the grocer or the minister or——"

"You," said Mary Ann, and the blush of her cheek was just as becoming to her as if she had been twenty-five years younger—at least, that was James' opinion.

OSCAR.

WHAT DO DREAMS MEAN?

WHO has not at one time or another had some curious dream, the significance of which has perplexed him? Some dreams are caused by an overheated imagination or an impaired digestion, and others are so trivial as not to cause any grounds for a second thought being bestowed upon them.

On the other hand, there are many dreams which have an unquestionable significance. Many of them are influenced by our daily actions and thoughts, and frequently we find ourselves doing in our dreams what we would do in our daily life. These exercise our minds, and if we only knew what they portend we might be able to avoid events that afterwards come to pass. The history of the world is full of instances where dreams of a prophetic character have taken place, and the belief in them is shared by scientific and intelligent writers in every part of the world.

Occasionally a so-called dream book or two has been published pretending to give an explanation of these curious phenomena, but, as we all know, most of them are absolutely unreliable and are nothing but catchpenny publications.

We recently made the acquaintance of a lady who has made the laws of Oneirology a life study, and her explanations we have found to be singularly true in cases upon which we have consulted her. She has the reputation of being the most expert person in the world in this science. Accordingly we have made arrangements with her to give the fullest information to any reader of this paper who cares to send asking her advice. Readers should be very careful to explain in the fullest manner the whole extent of their dream. MADAME GEORGES will reply, giving a full explanation.

Readers should address their letters to "DREAMS," c/o. *Short Stories* Offices. Henrietta Street, Strand, W.C., and inclose six penny stamps and a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

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The Tale of the Yellow War.

BY M. P. SHIEL.

Author of "The Man-Stealers," "Prince Zaleski," "Shapes in the Fire," "The Rajah's Sapphire," etc.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Meeting.

As for the girl Seward, Hardy was told by his agent that she occupied a flat in Bloomsbury, a flat rather well furnished, where, with a servant of her own, she lived alone. And, without five minutes' delay, Hardy was in a carriage hurrying to the address given.

He doubted if this could be the girl he wanted. She lived, certainly, under another name. And how came Ada, the nurse-maid, to be flourishing in such a style? Morbidly anxious as he was to have her safe and sure in his own keeping, it hardly occurred to him that this very opulence accounted for the reticences and hesitations of her brother with regard to her.

But in twenty minutes he was sure. On a third floor a servant led him into a snug drawing-room, and there, on the wall, he saw an oval coloured photograph: and he recognised the slim bust, and the little Chinese eyes, and the piquant Geisha-girl face, warm-yellow in tint.

At the door, the servant, a narrow-browed, mean-looking creature, had told him that Miss Seward was away; and as he wished to speak further, she had asked him within.

Where, then, was Miss Seward?

She had gone away.

When?

Four hours before.

Where to?

To Dover.

Was that certain?

Quite certain.

But whatever had she gone to Dover for?

That the servant could not say, or would not say.

But was Miss Seward coming back soon?

The servant did not think so. Miss Seward had left her sufficient money to keep her for some time.

Did the servant know much of Miss Seward's private affairs?

She knew something. She and Miss Seward were very good friends indeed. Miss Seward sometimes spoke of things to her. But, of course, she did not know everything.

What did "*everything*" mean?

It meant nothing.

Then Hardy began to woo, to implore; then to speak of big matters; to say that all this was important to more than he could name. But the girl smirked, and did not follow that flight. The last thing that occurred to him was a bribe; only in the final moment of his despair did the thought flash through his mind. He hinted at hazard a hundred pounds, and the promptness of the response surprised him.

It was a large sum for a poor girl.

Yes; and all he wanted to know was *why* Miss Seward had gone to Dover.

She had gone in order to go over to France to the little Chinaman who was in love with her.

And now it was the turn of the servant to be surprised—at the swift energy with which Hardy vanished from her eye-sight.

He bore on his breast the initials of this girl, Seward; she was *his*, his very own.

But he was in this dilemma: that things far more momentous on their surface demanded his personal presence where he was. It needed all the acumen of his shrewd eye to determine which was the main fact which must influence his conduct.

He drove to the nearest post-office, and telegraphed to the manager of the London, Chatham and Dover railway.

There was at this moment not a hope left to Britain. The Admiralty had chains of steamers, intercommunicating with each other, and with the south-east coast, whose task was to watch and to report. And the nation now knew that on the morrow of this final-looking, sunless Wednesday, was due the horror of ultimate overthrow—the going beneath the wave of the last emerging rock of the old world.

Nor had the general mass of the nation the faintest suspicion of any power in the earth which could save, or even momentarily help, it.

If a heavenly host should appear in mid-sky wrapped in flames of vengeance, then, perhaps, that surge might be stemmed. But though the people were now far from doubting the interest of the gods, their reasons were the

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offspring of too advanced a period of Time to await any such manifestation.

It was known that a wholly inconceivable number of floating things of every kind were massed upon the extreme north-west coast of France; and that in their passage over to England they would have one of the finest war-fleets the world had ever seen to protect them—against nothing!

And now—in this hour of world-tragedy—the British people offered to the "Eyes that regard" a good spectacle. The panic was gone. In such a place as the City of London there was, of course, no business done; but everywhere else there was business done. Shops were open; post-offices were open; the printing-press throbbed. If a man met a man in the street, one pallid lip spoke to the other pallid consciousness of the dark weather, of a business matter, of a family affair—of everything except the Chinese. The subject of the Chinese in these last days was rather looked upon as being in bad taste. The lower classes spoke of them—but, in general, with splendidly curved lip. With a sublime stoicism, with a regal disdain, Britain waited for her overthrow.

Nearly everyone made a point of going about his ordinary work.

In the last resort, *the lip* remains. It is the final retort of a noble man, of a grand nation, to Destiny. "The mind and spirit remain invincible. . . ."

What could Britain do now? She could smile.

And by this her pallid smile in that hour, she proved, in truth, her divine right to the Empire of the Earth.

Besides smiling, every man, and most boys, managed to provide themselves with some sort of weapon, sharp or blunt, dull or gleaming, which they laid quietly by.

A gentleman at Highgate had for a week been training a fine specimen of the British bull-dog to fly at a Mongolian effigy set up in his garden.

In reality, the arm of England was as strong as her soul; but she knew the strength of her soul, and did not suspect the strength of her arm.

Her arm was John Hardy.

At least he was the main muscle of it. He was as much the West as Yen How was the East.

But what is this shadow that dogs his steps?—something absurd, grotesque, yet terrible?

At eight he had sent the telegram to the railway company. At nine he drove away once more from Cavendish Square, leaving a host of orders with an almost permanent committee of naval men who now attended upon him. And he had no sooner driven away, than a man in wide sombrero was asking at his door if he was at home.

In this man, Edrapol, there was not now, if there had ever been, an atom of venom against Hardy. He was merely the slave of punctilio. In the view of that frivolous old brain, nothing in the world could compare in importance with the importance of an *affaire d'honneur*, a delicate point, a shade of usage. The thing first of all that a gentleman must do—in every case—whatever happened—was to settle "a delicate point."

Also, he knew the greatness of Hardy. And his vanity was prone, the moment he found himself in safety on English soil, to measure swords with him.

He knew, too, that soon the Chinese must be here also, and then . . . . what could be done? *Voilà une affaire manquée.* Nothing could be more annoying to a gentleman than an *affaire manquée.*

It was clear that whatever he did must be instantaneously done. The morrow would, perhaps, not "do his affair."

He took the broad hat from his long-haired white head, and he bowed largely, as old Bobbie himself informed him that Hardy was from home.

Edrapol asked whither he had gone, and the old man said:

"To Dover, sir."

Hardy vanished from her eye-sight.

Edrapol asked no more. He had brought over on his person a good sum in specie; he had also rings on his fingers worth money. He jumped into a cab, and drove in haste away.

With that noble phlegm of which we have spoken, things in England still, at this eleventh hour, ran, for the most part, their usual course. Few people were moving about; yet the trains ran empty, and the show of civilization continued when its reality seemed like a spent heart, about to beat its final throb.

So that Edrapol found a longed-for train about half an hour after Hardy's departure; and both engines, flying simultaneously through Kent, were "express."

As for Hardy, he reached Harbour Station in his rocking train within an hour and twenty minutes from his start.

He hurried to the Cross Wall; and there he had no difficulty in learning that the girl had certainly not hired any local craft, nor started from Dover that day. Nor had any craft left Dover eastward for some time.

The natural conclusion was that Ada Seward was still in Dover.

Nevertheless, Hardy spied about the harbour for some time among the steamboats, and pointed out one to a blue-jacket, named Brassey, who accompanied him. Brassey was to arrange with her captain; have her fires lit and banked; and Hardy scribbled a note to South Front Barracks, signing his name with the initials P. C. N. S.; it was a request for a small three-pounder and ammunition, which he instructed Brassey to mount for'ard on the designated steamer. He himself hurried to the Royal Ship Hotel, followed by a train of watermen, policemen, and residents, eager to serve him.

Nothing was so certain as that, if the girl were there, in a

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small place like Dover, he would quickly know it. In a few minutes fifty men were dissecting the town for him, and very soon he had the whole history of her stay in Dover.

She had put up for two hours at the Lord Warden Hotel; and had then left it, taking her portmanteau, in a cab. In the small period of her stay, she had made herself singularly friendly with one of the chamber-maids of the hotel, and confided to her the surprising secret that she was about to set out for Dunkirk. The cabman who took her away was found: and he stated that, having driven for some distance east towards St. Margaret-at-Cliffe, along the high road, his fare had ordered him to turn down a bye-road, leading directly to the shore. His surprise was immense when, at about a mile from the Upper Foreland Lighthouse, which was burning all day, she again ordered him to stop and take down her trunk. He did so, laid it on the sands, and was paid. The last he saw as he drove away was the girl sitting on the box, with lonely outlook over the dim sea.

Was there no ship in the offing?

There might have been; he could not say. One could not see many yards over the sea through the dark. He was certain that there was no ship with burning lights.

Here, then, was the last link: the chain ending at the girl watching the drear sea from her box on the sands.

It did not, however, need a very vivid imagination to conjecture why she sat there; and in half-an-hour after hearing the news, Hardy had the North Pier Signal-Light dwindling into nothingness on his port quarter; and the downs-trotter which bore him was panting and quivering as she had not panted for many a day. He calculated that the girl had, at most, an hour's start of him.

As he passed out between the two piers, Edrupol arrived at Priory Station, and began to make inquiries for Hardy. After a time he heard the truth; but his disappointment was solaced by the news that Hardy would very likely return before morning.

At this time, Ada Seward, borne in one of those safe, but rather clumsy, Havre-Antwerp boats, was fifteen miles or so on her way from the English coast.

Some months before this a singular adventure had befallen the girl.

Walking along the street, she had been accosted by a man—a Yankee, as she judged by his goat beard, his lank lounge, and his talk.

He nodded with cool confidence to her, and, with oily modulations, he said this:

"Well, young woman, I guess you are in luck's way this time, anyhow."

In ten minutes he had left her, and leaving her, insinuated £50 in Bank of England notes into her hand. This, he explained, was only "to go on with" for a day or so.

He was not the principal, he said, but only an agent—"matter of business"—in which, to tell the truth, he did not stand in so badly. But he was not the principal in the deal: the principal she would see on the next evening at the hour and place which he named.

The "principal" was a huge pig-tailed, silk-dressed Chinaman—a great man in his country.

All he wanted of Ada Seward was to be permitted to buy her grand houses, and carriages and footmen, and gowns, and luxuries. For this, nothing, on his honour, in return—save that she should be under his eye, and obey him as a daughter. The Yankee acted as go-between; and Ada thought she would like all this.

So, away now with Pattison's, and the nursery; and shopping now all day for Ada at Peter Robinson's, the carriage waiting outside.

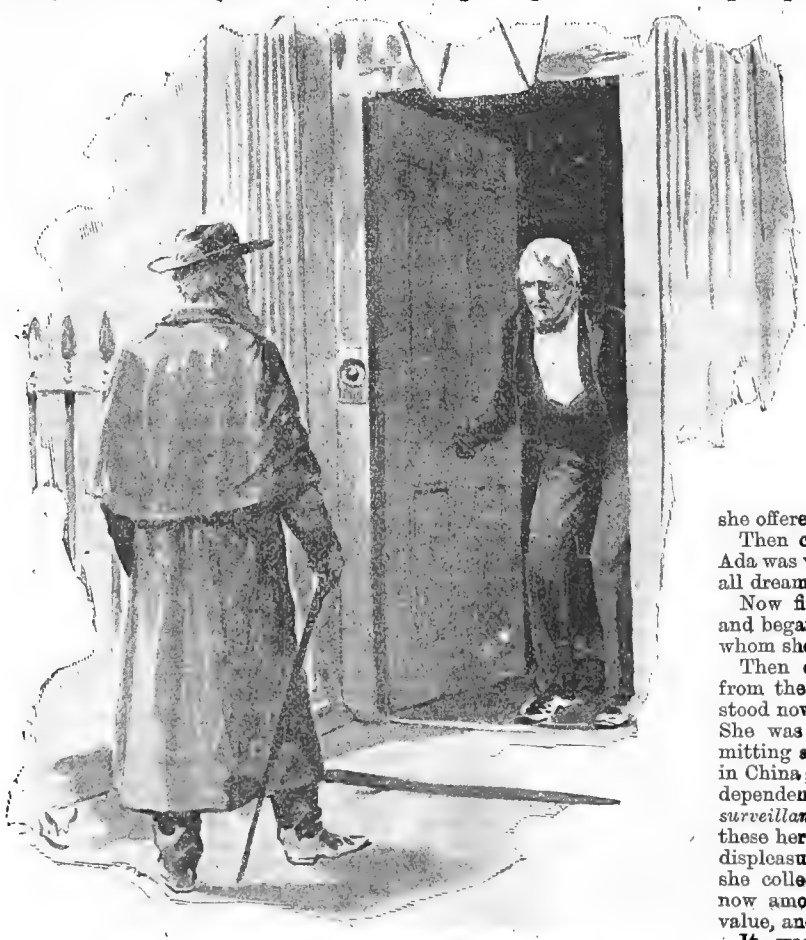
She changed her name, breaking with her poor, but proud, relations, who, in spite of her protestations, believed that her foot had slipped. Her brother tossed back the gold she offered him in her face.

Then came proposals from the "principal." Ada was wanted in China, where wealth beyond all dream awaited her. She refused.

Now first she heard the name of Yen How, and began to understand. That little doctor at whom she had scoffed. . . . !

Then came pressure, threats. But apart from the pressure, and the threats, she understood now that she had sold herself into slavery. She was subjected to a most rigorous, unremitting *surveillance*, like an upper-class woman in China; and she had at bottom a touchy, independent pride of character. Add to this *surveillance* the pressure, the threats, and to these her uneasy consciousness of her people's displeasure, and what she did may be guessed: she collected all the trinkets about her, which now amounted to many hundreds of pounds' value, and she ran away.

It was then that she set up on her own account in the Bloomsbury flat



Bobbie informed him that Hardy was from home.

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Already she was too much of a lady to do without a servant.

She hid herself with such absolute craft that neither "principal," nor "agent," nor for a long time the agents of Hardy, nor her brother, could find her.

It was on hearing of this flight that Yen How decided that, whatever happened, none of the women of England must be killed.

Then, when the end was near, when it was certain that England was doomed, a noble throe leapt into life within this girl. She conceived the quixotic, but subjectively fine, notion of sacrificing herself for her country. On condition that England was spared, she would go to Yen.

And boldly breaking from her seclusion, she presented herself with this proposal before the "agent"; and agent and principal, in a room in Portland Street, where the principal lived now in strictest retirement, gloated over this thing.

And they two, with elaborate cautions and precautions, made two voyages to the French coast, one with the glad message in the girl's own writing, from which they returned with Yen How's "Come;" and one to arrange minute preliminaries of the meeting.

And thus it happened that, in order to get to France, Ada Seward sat alone on her box on the Foreland sands, and looked across the sea.

She was genuinely confident that she was "saving" something large and not very definite; and, as she stepped into the boat which quickly made its appearance at the surf, the thought in her beating, yet bold, heart was this: What a One am I!

In order to lay his eyes once more upon this girl at the earliest moment, Yen How was ready to fling to the winds, or at least postpone, a world of affairs which no head but his could surely organise. But the momentum of events overpowered him. He could not go.

He himself chose the safest-looking, tidiest, and smartest of the smaller craft of which the Outer Harbour, the Commercial Dock, and the Naval Dock were now one thickly crowded mass.

He had then been at Dunkirk two days, making the Casino des Dunes his head-quarters. But when he looked abroad upon that once neatest of cities, and considered the heaped-up horror of its red streets, and the whirling drama of mixed revel and warlike preparations going forward within its walls, he knew that here, at least, his bride could not come.

Standing, however, a little back from the Sea Baths at Rosendaël, two miles away, was a lonely villa, backed by the desolate sand-dunes, and within eat-shot of the continual rumour of the shore. Here, at eleven in the night, almost alone, restless, perambulating, expecting, was Yen How.

He had rescued himself with a sort of stealth from Dunkirk.

He was like some singer, the darling of the world, who yet is the secret victim of drink; and while the plaudits still ring through the opera-house, *he*, in the inmost recess of the green-room, has the tilting bottle at his lips.

By midnight the lights of Dunkirk were well in sight of the steamer which bore Ada Seward. The boat was manned by Japanese, men in whom Yen How had confidence. But she was unarmed.

She was travelling at her utmost speed, and carried only one light—a mast-head light.

This fact made her *outré*, an object of observation; it was sufficient to hint her identity; and behind her, straining every timber to catch her, came frothing a slightly faster boat.

So that when the boat ahead was perhaps not half a mile from her anchorage nearly opposite Rosendaël, the boat behind was five hundred yards only from the boat ahead; and it was then that the former sent a guess-work shot, but a shot aimed by Hardy's own hand, into the stern-works of the other.

She had been accosted by a man.

The Japanese boat at once shot round, and went steaming in a changed direction, rudderless. Consternation reigned on her decks: over the sea came to Hardy's ship sounds of shouting voices.

The girl, who had been lying in sleep on the red-velvet cabin-cushions, rushed on deck. And as she reached it, again she heard the boom of cannon, and screamed.

And all that happened from that moment during ten minutes was a mere horrid whirl to her; there was a scampering of men, and yells, and everywhere a rush of the sea, and a leap into a boat, and a singing in her ears, and a smell like brimstone, and the flash of a bull's-eye in her eyes.

Then she felt firmness beneath her feet, and presently she was crying, half-lying back on cushions.

Hardy, sitting near, eyed her curiously for some minutes of silence. Here was a force greater than a 100-ton gun, great as the moon and the tides; old Astarté crying there in a dainty West-end bonnet—the strong sex of woman.

The presence of the girl, in his power at last, filled him with a certain calm. With her, he felt he might win.

The sobs died gradually lower. And he said:

"You feel better now?"

"Yes—thank you—sir," she answered jerkily.

Up to now she had not recognised him.

"Then I can talk to you. You understand that it was to get *you* that I sank the other ship?"

"*Me?*" she queried, sitting up at once in wide-awake interest.

"Yes. I knew you were going to Yen How, and I wanted at all hazards to prevent you. Whatever induced you to act in that unworthy way?"

"Which unworthy way, sir? But stop, are you——"

"Yes—we have met before. But that is not the point. Tell me, why have you been so foolish and wicked, Ada?"

"Oh, come now, this is a little too much, you know!" cried Ada. "Who are you? And what right have you to take me in this way? *I* foolish and wicked? It is absolutely untrue; and I don't think you'd be ungentlemanly enough to treat a poor girl in this way if you knew all."

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He stole stooping up to the window.

"Well then, tell me all. And do not cry, because that wastes time."

"Oh, it is all very well to talk in that way, sir!" she answered saucily, though her heart forbode her at the look of the face before her. "Who are you? I am not aware by what right——"

"But you are wasting my time. John Hardy is my name, and I have the right of a man trying to serve his country. Tell me now."

"Oh, John Har——! Well, you will excuse me, won't you? I was not to know that. But was it you, then, all the time, at the music——"

"Yes. Now tell me."

"Why I was going, you mean? Well, if it comes to that, wasn't I going for the same reason which you say—to serve my country, too?"

"Is that really so?"

"It is, sir."

"And how?"

"Well, since you seem to know about me and Yen How—didn't he give me to understand that, if I came, he would save England from the Chinese? And isn't that why I am going to him? To make him keep his army away from England?"

At this exhibition of inherent confidence in her power over Yen, this radical, unquestioning trust in the might of her sex, a smile flitted through the brain of Hardy. He said:

"Then you are not wicked, after all; but only foolish. As I have you in my hands, and as I am going to take you back to England, I will let you understand why. You are right in believing that Yen How is very much attached to you; that is so; I know it well. I believe that his attachment to you is as extraordinary in its force as the man himself is extraordinary. Well now; but can you be so simple as to think that the way to make use of this infatuation for the good of your country is to come and put yourself in his power in this fashion? Supposing he even tried to keep his armies from going over to England and killing us all, he could not permanently succeed, you know; and supposing he succeeded, you have sense enough to know, have you not, that England would be no good at all with the rest of the world full of yellow men? In that case she had better go under, too, like the rest, don't you think? You would not care to live in such a kennel, nor would I, nor any of us English. So, you see, you are throwing away yourself for nothing. But I, now, have a better card to play, I am thinking! Do you know that I have been searching everywhere for you for weeks? My idea was this: that this vast Chinese people would be no good at all when confronted with the harsh, steady, untiring frown of England—provided we could only get their leader well dead. That is the first thing to do. Yen How is the weak point of all that great host; and you, Ada, are the weak point of Yen How. That is why I wanted to have you safe in my hands all this time, so as to be sure that you were there. If you are in England, I have not a doubt that Yen How will come, like a fish to the bait; and if he comes, as sure as fire we'll catch him. But if I let you go over to him in this way to France, you see, don't you, how that would spoil everything?"

"I see, sir," said Ada.

"Well, now, in what we have got to do to-night you can help us: we want to let Yen How know that you are safe in England, and in my hands. He must not have any doubt about that in his mind; and as he is expecting you, I suppose, in the ship I have sunk, he will have a doubt when she does not arrive, unless we enlighten him. He will think very likely that you are lost with the crew of the ship; and that suspicion may be enough to keep him out of our hands. So, then, I want you to tell me where, and under what conditions, you were to meet Yen How to-night."

"I can hardly say exactly," she replied; "he is in a house by itself near the shore."

"Is he alone?"

"They told me that there was hardly anyone with him."

"There is a single light just ahead of us in shore: is that the place, do you know?"

"It may be, sir; I should think it would be. I cannot say."

Hardy jumped sharply up and called "Brassey!" in a shout that made him cough.

Brassey at once appeared—a beardless, Cockney-looking man.

"How far are we in?" asked Hardy.

"About a quarter of a mile, sir."

"No lights on board showing?"

"No, sir."

"Pick three men to go with you and me in the boat; ask if they can shoot at all, and give them the pistols; better look to yours and mine. Tell them to stop speed. And find me at once, Brassey, a pair of scissors, if you can."

On a side-table in the cabin were pens, ink, and paper. Hardy sat and wrote a few words; and almost as soon as he had finished Brassey was at his side with a pair of scissors.

Hardy at once hurried across to where Ada Seward sat; he muttered:

"If you do not mind—just one little lock. . . ."

Before she knew, he had clipped a tendril of her light-reddish hair. He had ever a conspicuous lack of ceremony when at work *pro bono publico*.

He returned now to the table, and inclosed the hair with the scribbled sheet in an envelope, which he directed: "Yen How, Europe."

On the sheet he had written: "From John Hardy to Yen How,

"Hair of Miss Seward, who is in the safe keeping of John Hardy, at 11a, Cavendish Square, London."

A few minutes later, wrapped to his ears in a long black ulster, he was at the tiller of a boat making for the shore.

The sea was calm, and only a slow, swinging *bruit* from the breaker-line informed with its murmurous monotone the very drear and dark night.

The air was stagnant as the vapid atmosphere of some dead world. It seemed pervaded by a certain visible gloom.

In ten mintes, Hardy, with a spring, was upon Chinese territory. The three men put off again a little from land: Brassy stationed himself on the wet sand, instructed how to act in case of a preconcerted signal; alone Hardy moved forward.

He had in one hand the letter, and in the other a pistol.

Yonder shining steadily through the murky dark was a light, which seemed nearer than it was; half a mile along the East stretch of fine sand lay Rosendaël, but invisible, deserted. The noise of Dunkirk could not be heard, but a blurred hint of luminosity marked its situation. A stone's throw away, on the left, stood a row of five bathing machines. The upward-tending region of sand-hill and dune behind the villa was lost in gloom.

Yet the near was not invisible. Hardy, having passed the broad band of level sand, was able to make his way with tolerable precision among the knolls, and light, uneven ground. Once he collided with a low, back-less bench, half sunken askew into a scraggy growth of grass; once and again he stumbled into a hole of sand.

The house was very far. It stood on a slightly raised plateau of firmer ground, facing the sea; and the light seen from the sea was in an open window near the ground. The house was white, and small; its doors and windows Gothic.

He stole stooping up to the window, and looked in. The room, lighted by a lamp, was a species of *salon*. On a chair in a corner burnt a Chinese lantern.

From a window on the right side also he saw ooze a radiance from within, and with cautious tread he approached it also. The casement was latticed, and sparsely overgrown with some bind-weed. But he was able to observe that the room was gaudily decorated, tapestried with green and crimson silks, in the centre a spread table, laden with fruit and plate of gold. A multitude of coloured lanterns made it a nest of variegated glamours. And here, busy about the table, he saw two richly-dressed Chinese.

He made the tour of the house, and saw no other living thing. All was dead silence and stagnation. He came back to the front window, dropped in the letter directed to Yen How, and turned away.

His way now was downhill, and he walked faster, with less precaution, swinging freely along. He had gone on in this way for perhaps five minutes, when he stopped suddenly short, all eyes and ears. He had heard the distinct sound of footsteps near.

In two or three seconds the muzzle of a pistol was at his forehead, and the muzzle of his pistol was at the forehead of a man.

They peered closely into each other's face.

"Well, you do not fire, and I will not," said the man coolly.

He was not an Englishman—something in his intonation showed that; yet he spoke English.

He had recognised Hardy; but Hardy did not recognise him.

"Is it agreed?" the man said.

"Well."

"Drop your pistol."

"You drop yours."

"And you promise?"

"Yes."

There was a thud on the ground, and a moment after another.

"Poh! You have lost your chance," said the man.

Then Hardy knew Yen.

Even though it was a totally different Yen to the pompous, pig-tailed Arch-Priest, the great Apostle, who had been awaiting, with restless wanderings over the dunes, his tarrying bride. It was a Yen in simple English clothes, with a hard felt hat over his bald forehead, and without *queue* behind.

(To be continued.)

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE
OF
Mr. GLADSTONE.

By One Who Knew Him.

The longest and most exhaustive article on the subject ever written appears in THE SUNDAY READER of June 4th.

It is an article of unparalleled interest, and should be read by all.

DO NOT MISS IT. *DO NOT MISS IT.*

ONE PENNY. THE SUNDAY READER. ONE PENNY.

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FIRST PRIZE . . £5 | **25 Prizes of Handsome Books.**
Five Prizes of £1 each. | **25 Gold-plated Pencil-cases.**

In the event of a tie, the prizes will be awarded at the discretion of the Editor.

BELOW will be found eight pictures. Each one depicts the name of some place, or ship, or man associated with the combatants in the Hispano-American War. Five sets of these pictures will be published. Write down the names in the spaces provided, and keep all the sets by you until we ask you to send them in.

The daily newspapers will give you the best help in discovering solutions, as most of the names depicted have already appeared in the press.

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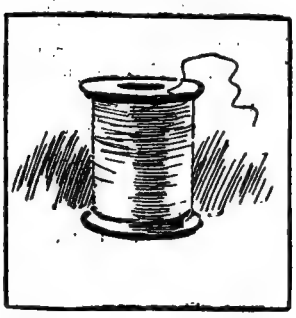

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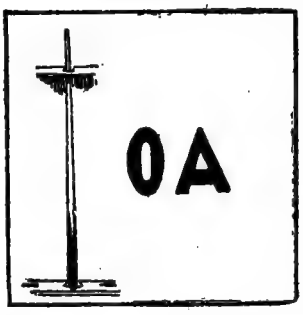

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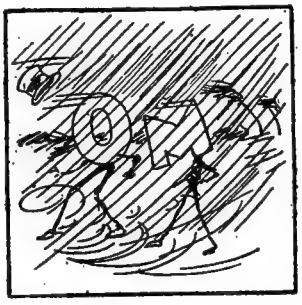

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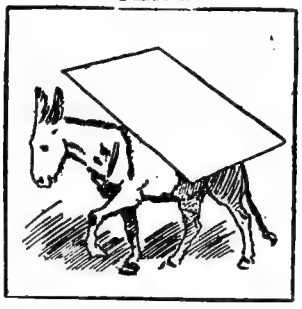

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THE CANOE BUILDER'S RUSE.

The Snohomish River, gathering up the Skykomish the Snoqualimie, and all the river children within her arms, rushes down the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains and mingles her turbulent waters with the salty tides of Puget Sound just where Chuh-tlahks, the One-with-the-Nose-of-Stone, juts his bold and rugged bluff out into the clear, cold, and mingled waters.

Long before the white man had set his foot upon the land, the Sdohobsch (Snohomish) had dwelt about the mouth of this mighty river which now bears their name.

Among these quiet and peaceable fisher folk two brothers of the tribe dwelt together. One, though in every sense a man, was small and weak beside his brother. This other was a very giant in strength, though a lamb in mood, and his lithe, supple form shot upward for full six straight feet or more.

And so it came about that this hardy Hercules of the western wilds followed the chase, while his weaker brother became a hewer of wood and a builder of canoes.

All the day long you might hear the "pee-yah-kud" (hand-adze) singing tuck-tuck-tuck-tuck as Dus-py-yuk on the beach sent it eating its way into the heart of the cedar that was to become a canoe. And all the live-long day Dus-sluh-hobe ranged the forest, for he was a hunter, bold and brave and daring.

He was wild and roving, and often spent whole days trailing the bear or the deer deep within the forest. Or perhaps he might embark in his light canoe, seeking that king of fish—the salmon. And if luck favoured him he might, perchance, steal upon a hair seal unawares, and gain at once both food and raiment. What a feast they had then in the "ah-lahl" (house) as their friends dined with them!

In time Dus-py-yuk took unto himself a wife to sit beside him, but Dus-sluh-hobe remained unwed. In due season children also came to Dus-py-yuk—many children, and they made the sands of the beach merry all the day long with their laughter and their childish pranks.

But merrier still did they make the heart of the lone Dus-sluh-hobe, and the thoughts of the hungry little ones and their glistening eyes more than once drove the winged shaft truer to its home within the breast of the bear.

Day by day the bond between the two brothers grew stronger; and stronger still the bond of love between the children and the lone one. But the jealous wife fumed with wrath to find her will weighing naught against that of the brother.

Hour by hour the mischief brooded in her breast, until she began to plan her revenge upon her unsuspecting and beneficent kinsman. Sleep sat lightly on her eyelids at nights, and her mind was full of evil thoughts.

As ill-fortune would have it, it so chanced that Dus-py-yuk was now called away each day to build a great war canoe some distance down the beach, where the wind with its unseen knife had felled a great cedar that was ripe for the touch of the "pee-yah-kud." This was his wife's opportunity.

Our evil fortunes often come to us in the guise of good, and perhaps that is why Dus-sluh-hobe became unusually successful in his search, for he came back daily loaded with spoil from the chase. The jealous wife did not tell her husband of his brother's great kindnesses to them as they talked together at night and at odd moments in the morning. She had other plans! During the day she herself ate greedily of all that was brought by the brotherly huntsman; but gave the children little or nothing to eat, though the very odour of the feast which they had not tasted sharpened the pangs of hunger.

All through the evening and the night she poured

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into the unwilling ears of her spouse many stories of the wicked greed and selfishness of the brother, and pointed to the half-starved children to vouch for the truth of her lies. Alas for Dus-py-yuk! How eager was his wish to disbelieve these evil things—how often did he refute them as the idle tales of an idle woman. But the children—he might disbelieve the woman—could he disbelieve his own eyes?

Alas! It is the constant washing of the sea that eats into the heart of the hardest rock and undermines it at last. So in time it could not fail but that his wife's tales should have some effect even upon the great love of Dus-py-yuk for his brother.

He became sad and moody. Was he not good and kind to his brother? Why should he treat him so? Were they not bound by the strong bonds of blood? Could any be stronger?

A trouble brooded over loses nothing in the brooding, and the tiny seed of suspicion planted by the woman, sunned and watered by the man's own mood, was not long in putting forth a luxuriant growth, till finally both man and wife were brooding to the same end: how they could rid themselves of the brother.

Dus-py-yuk bethought himself. He was a man of great skill in the use of the "pee-yah-kud." Did he not fashion for his daughter that wooden bear that would roll his tongue? Did he not make for his son that wooden seal that swam upon the water like life?

A seal? Ah!

To the woods he went and built, not canoes, but a seal—a seal like that which he had made for Sta-bill, but larger—and more life-like; for his seal should know how to do all that a seal should do—to swim, to dive, to bark—upon this he pledged all his skill.

After many days his task was done, and the wooden seal was all that his fancy had imagined it. It was nearly time for the full moon, and when Sdoqualb should grow great in the heavens he would go out when the tide was low and place his seal upon the seal rock. Then, when the tide came in, the seal should call his brother to his doom as surely as the darkness follows the night.

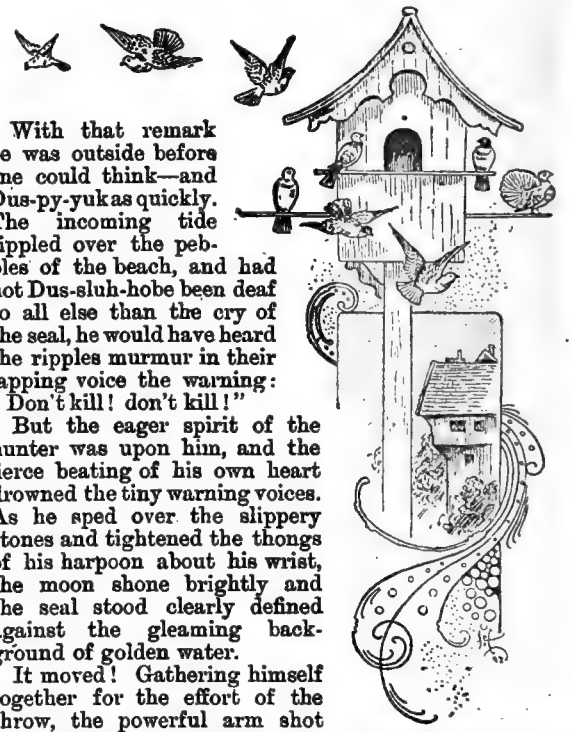
It was the time of the full moon, and the tide was rushing far out. A dark form moved cautiously along the beach here and there, from shadow to shadow, and at last to the seal rock itself. Soon the seal appeared perched high upon its rocky crest, though there was no water near at hand. Again might the dark form be seen working its way cautiously back, till it disappeared in the blackness of the forest that fringed the shore.

Dus-py-yuk returned to the "ah-lahl" as though from his daily labour, and Dus-sluh-hobe welcomed him—thrice welcomed he—asking him anxiously as to the cause of his delay. At the sound of the cheery voice Dus-py-yuk's heart became lighter, though weighted down with its dark secret of death. But the heart of the wife sank within her breast, for she thought her spouse would fail her at the critical moment.

The cheerfulness of the one drove moodiness far away from the heart of the other, until Dus-py-yuk completely forgot his plot. Suddenly a short, hoarse bark smote the air, and they sprang to their feet with one impulse. Dus-py-yuk, quickly regaining himself, spoke first.

"A seal, my brother—it's only a seal!"

"Yes, a seal," responded Dus-sluh-hobe, "but a seal with such a voice means food for days, and clothes for the little ones all the winter long! Ah, my Bright Cheeks, my little one, do you not want a new skirt of sealskin? You shall have it! It waits for you on the beach already!"



With that remark he was outside before one could think—and Dus-py-yuk as quickly. The incoming tide rippled over the pebbles of the beach, and had not Dus-sluh-hobe been deaf to all else than the cry of the seal, he would have heard the ripples murmur in their lapping voice the warning: "Don't kill! don't kill!"

But the eager spirit of the hunter was upon him, and the fierce beating of his own heart drowned the tiny warning voices. As he sped over the slippery stones and tightened the thongs of his harpoon about his wrist, the moon shone brightly and the seal stood clearly defined against the gleaming background of golden water.

It moved! Gathering himself together for the effort of the throw, the powerful arm shot out, launching the weapon like a writhing snake, hurtling through the air. He listened—a thud—was it a groan?—and a splash, almost simultaneously, told him that his javelin had found its mark. Quicker than it takes to tell it, the line sank through space and tightened, and the thong began to cut deeper into the flesh—such a seal!

Instantly he found himself being dragged seawards over the beach, where the prattling of tiny surf still murmured mournfully: "Don't kill! Don't kill!" Moments were precious. Dus-sluh-hobe felt at his belt for his knife—it was gone. It was never away from him—where could it be? Then in the agony of his heart he knew that death stared him in the face.

Bright Cheeks called to know if he was bringing her the skirt—alas! He would never see the little ones more. He turned to his brother, who had turned to fly; but at the sound of the despairing voice his feet faltered beneath his weight. He could not leave his brother to his fate—surely the bonds of blood are stronger than those of evil desire!

He turned and caught one glimpse of a face full of brotherly love—he saw a swiftly vanishing form—he heard a great splash; then the tiny patter of falling spray, like an echo. And then there came wafted to him a gurgling greeting.

"Farewell, oh, my brother! I go to the other land! Farewell!"

In a moment the surging tide of hatred had ebbed from the heart of Dus-py-yuk, as he beheld his once-beloved brother going to his doom through the hand of him who should have given shield and shelter, instead of murder. A flood tide of remorse rushed into his being, sweeping resistless over the thought of his wicked wife, and burying her in oblivion for ever.

With a cry of encouragement he dashed after his brother. Despair lent him strength. He swam towards

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the tiny speck so rapidly disappearing. Superhuman energy sent the phosphorescent water in long streamers of light from his wildly-beating arms. Swiftly he swam, as never before, yet slowly indeed did he draw upon his brother.

At last, nearly dead from his efforts, he overtook the receding form, and clung to it madly, wrapping a portion of the thong about himself.

Together and half unconscious they were dragged away at a great speed, too great to be able to free themselves. For days and for nights the relentless and unfeeling creation of Dus-py-yuk's hands towed and dragged its living freight, creator and victim alike. They passed by strange countries and over unknown seas.

Day by day they grew more chilled, until they reached the land of the "Kway-kwus-sty-bue" (Esquimaux)—the land where the men are all short like children, broad and shaggy like a bear and equally as strong. And there they found themselves free from the seal.

Here they saw a peculiar man with a canoe, and he was fishing, but in a manner hitherto unknown to them. He had neither net nor line, nor bait with which to snare the fish—nothing save his own two hands. As they watched him, they saw him dive under the water, and bring up a fish in his hands.

The brothers watched in great astonishment at the sight. They were quite hungry. As they had not eaten for a long time, the sight of a boat half full of fish made them feel still more keenly the pangs of hunger. But they were afraid of the man. Finally hunger conquered fear, and as the little man went under in another plunge they swam rapidly to the canoe, each stole a fish and returned to shore with it.

Again and again they repeated the trick till they had no fear of hunger for some days to come.

But, alas! their hunger was greater than their discretion, and had betrayed them; for the little man noticed the rapid disappearance of his fish, and flew into a violent rage, which grew greater and greater as he sought for the culprits. He was terrible to behold. Could he not hear their very teeth clack together in fright? Could he not see the very ground itself shake with their quaking?

When at last he chanced upon the stealers of his fish, he vented his wrath upon them in abundant measure. He made the brothers his slaves, and took them home to his people to do the duties of bondsmen.

Long and wearily they worked out the days of their bondage in the land of the "Kway-kwus-sty-bue," till their hearts grew sick for a sight of the groves of fir and cedar at home, and till they grew hungry for a taste of salmon, deer, or grouse. At last, after a weary, weary service, they managed to escape from their taskmaster, but, alas! home was far away, and many miles of ocean rolled between them and it. They must swim back the way they had been brought.

Days passed, and nights passed. They saw strange lands, and the sun grew warmer. The longer they swam the easier it became to swim, and the more they liked it. Then they thought of the years since they had left both home and people, and how their friends must be dead and gone to the other land. Why should they return to a land that would now be strange to them?

So they resolved to become whales, the great swimmers, and swim always. And they became whales and learnt to swim much faster. But though they did not return as men, the bond of blood is strong; they could not forget their people, and so each year they return to Chuh-tlahks, driving the flying schools of salmon before them. And the racks of Chuh-tlahks are red with the drying fish, the very air is oily and heavy with the odour, and the hearts of the Sdohobsch are glad because of the salmon, and glad because the Sdohobsch have not utterly forgotten their own.

And when the salmon are few, when the nets are drawn in empty, and the hearts of the fishers fail even of hope, then the brothers, the whales, rush upon the frightened fish with open mouth; right and left they dash, driving whole schools of salmon upon the beach that their people may have no lack of food.

And so it happens that the teepees of the Sdohobsch are filled with food, and the bleak winter season passes by, and hunger touches them not with its gaunt hand.

GERALD BLAKE.

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A LADY'S PORTRAIT.

I felt on very good terms with myself that summer evening as I sat at the window which overlooked the Rue MoMahon, idly smoking and building many a visionary "*Château en Espagne.*" Had not my first important picture, the "Portrait of a Lady," been accepted by the Paris Salon? Had not the critics, notoriously good judges of painting, spoken highly of it? Was it to be wondered at that my modesty for once sank into the background, and that hope spoke kindly in my ears?

My pleasing reflections were interrupted by the entrance of a servant, bearing a letter. I observed, to my surprise, that the seal bore the coat of arms of the Montcour family, which, as all the world knows, boasts a lineal descent from Charlemagne. The Marquis de Montcour I had often heard of as a strong partisan of the Bourbons, but otherwise I knew nothing concerning him. What could be the subject of his letter to me? I opened it and read as follows:

Château Montcour,
June 1st.

The Marquis de Montcour presents his compliments to M. Albert Morton, whose address he has learnt at the Salon. M. Morton would be conferring a favour on the Marquis if he would paint for him the portrait of a member of the Montcour family, and would name his own price for doing so. In the event of this request being acceded to, the Marquis would be glad to receive M. Morton as his guest during the painting of the portrait. M. Morton will be pleased to receive the assurances, &c.

My delight can be well imagined. I had secured an influential art patron, other commissions would inevitably follow, and my future success was certain.

So I scribbled off an acceptance of the Marquis's offer and went to bed with a light heart.

A day later I received a second letter from the Marquis, informing me that his carriage would wait upon me at a given hour, in order to convey me to the Château. It did not take long to pack my bag, and at the time appointed I drove off in the Montcour equipage. After an hour's drive I found that we were in the outskirts of Paris, and seemed to be making for the open country. In another half-hour, the magnificent pair of bays slackened speed, and the carriage drove through the gateway and into the grounds of the Château.

I was told that the Marquis would be glad to see me in his study at my earliest convenience. He was a man of about fifty-five years of age, tall, and well formed. To describe the iron-grey hair, the rigid moustache, the piercing black eyes, would be an easy task; but no words could give an adequate idea of the intense hauteur which shone in every line of his countenance, and was to be remarked in every movement of his body. The man was an incarnation of pride.

After the usual polite inquiries, the Marquis, who, by the way, spoke excellent English, requested me to be seated.

"I am sorry," he said, "to have to trouble you in the first place by confiding a family secret to your keeping. This may seem a strange proceeding on my part, but you will see the necessity of it when I explain. The portrait I wish you to paint is that of my only daughter, Héloise. I have chosen you as the artist because you are an Englishman—a foreigner—and, therefore, there will be less likelihood of my secret being divulged. Will you give me your word as a gentleman and a man of honour, to reveal nothing that I may tell you, or that you may learn while in the Château?"

"Marquis," I replied, "your request is easily acceded to."

"I thank you, monsieur," resumed the Marquis, bowing gravely. "The facts of the case then are as follows. My daughter Héloise, of whom I am passionately fond, has for some time given the greatest uneasiness on account of the eccentricity of her behaviour, and has now, I regret to say, developed symptoms of positive insanity. Acting on a physician's advice, I have reluctantly resolved to place her in a lunatic asylum, where, of course, she will receive the best possible attention. You may imagine for yourself what a grief this has been to me, monsieur."

Indeed, it was very evident from the Marquis's whole bearing and from the slight vibration in his voice, that his iron soul was shaken within him, and I marvelled to see the curtain of pride drawn aside for one quivering moment from the recesses of his heart. He sat silent for a minute or two; then resolutely clenching his hand, he was himself again.

"It shall be given out that my daughter has taken the veil and entered the convent of St. Ursula in Paris. Thus will our family pride be saved."

"Is your daughter's insanity very noticeable?" I ventured to remark.

"I am sorry to say that I have been obliged to place her under restraint. She cannot be allowed, on any account, to leave the apartments which have been allotted to her. I wish," continued he, "to have a

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faithful portrait of my daughter as she is now, before the demon of insanity has completely obtained possession of her.

"Your hours for painting will be from ten to twelve in the morning, and from three to four in the afternoon. Four days from this, Héloise will be removed to the asylum. Is the time too short for you?"

"No, Marquis," I replied, "I think I may promise you that the portrait shall be completed by the end of the fourth day."

"Many thanks, monsieur. A small suite of rooms has been reserved for your use, and you will find your stay in the Château not, I hope, unpleasant."

I thanked the Marquis, and was then conducted to my apartments, where I found supper awaiting me. A valet had been allotted to my use, and I saw that the lines had indeed fallen to me in pleasant places. To my palate, used to *vin ordinaire*, the Ammontilado of the Château was a revelation. An excellent brand of cigars was provided for me, and the latest novels stood uncut upon the shelves of the bookcase. I went to sleep that night wishing that my old comrades of the Latin Quarter could but have seen me, "nursed in the lap of luxury!"

Next day I was conducted to the western wing of the building. I was astonished to find that the young lady's rooms, like my own, were situated in the topmost story, but, remembering the nature of her affliction, I judged that she had been placed here for the purpose of seclusion.

Yet another surprise awaited me, for on reaching the door which led to the suite, I saw, seated on a chair, with his back to the entrance, a gigantic negro. François, my valet, *pro tem*, spoke a few words to him in a low tone, and then directed me to go straight forward.

The negro carefully shut the door after me, and I found myself alone in a corridor with several rooms opening from it. At one of these doors appeared an attendant, a stern, forbidding-looking woman, who at once invited me to enter her charge's apartment.

My first hasty glance as I stepped forward revealed to me the fact that the boudoir, for such it was, was furnished with every luxury. The furniture was dainty, the curtains unique, and my footfall on the carpet was as noiseless as on a bank of moss.

The young lady was sitting in the cushioned seat of the bay-window, looking out over the wide prospect. At my entrance she turned languidly round, and the nurse, who spoke in French, introduced me to her. I commenced the usual banalities about the weather. To my surprise, Mademoiselle de Montcour answered me, as her father had done, in English. Then recollecting my business, I said:

"May I hope that you will sit to me this morning?"

"Yes," she replied in a sad, far-away voice; "if you wish."

Accordingly I erected my portable easel, and then began the task of posing my model. She was as wax in my hands, holding her head listlessly in any position I pleased. Finally everything was arranged to my satisfaction, and the sitting commenced.

My clumsy words can hardly pretend to describe Mademoiselle de Montcour's appearance. She was, let it be said, of medium height, and slender. Her hair was dark and luxuriant, her exquisite features were thrown into relief by the pallor of her cheeks, and her sad eyes looked out like stars of the night. I mentally compared her to a proud, pure lily, which some ruthless wind has utterly crushed and beaten to earth.

I went to bed that night in a very restless state of mind, and the reason was this: Throughout the day, as was natural, I had been on the look-out for signs of insanity in my beautiful model, and had observed her very closely for that purpose. But not the slightest trace of insanity could I find. She was languid, and intensely sad; but that was all.

Was it possible that the doctor had been mistaken? Could it be that she was the victim of foul play? Yet I could not but own that the emotion in her father's voice had been real and unaffected. I was completely puzzled, and, with a vague sense that something was wrong somewhere, tossed about from side to side, till at length I dropped into a troubled sleep.

Next day I was up betimes, and was at the corridor-door waiting for admittance, a few minutes before the clock struck ten. I saw nothing of the nurse, so I knocked at the door of the boudoir. The voice of Mademoiselle de Montcour bade me enter. I went into the room, and never shall I forget the change which came over the girl's face when she saw that I was alone. The listless expression fled, and in the place of it I saw surprise, fear, and agitated hope depicted on her features. Clasping her hands imploringly she whispered:

"I am not insane! Do not believe it! Oh, save me, save me!"

And as I looked into her eyes, clear with the light of reason, my doubts melted away, and I would have staked my life that she was not mad.

"Do you believe me, monsieur?" she asked entreatingly. "You can see I am telling you the truth, can you not?"

"Yes, yes," I stammered; "but—your father——"

"Oh," she said; "let me tell you quickly, or that woman will be here. My father loves me, but he would rather that I should die, that he himself should die, than that the Montcours should be humbled. But it happened one year ago—ah, how can I tell you, monsieur?" (and at this point a delicate rose-bloom invaded the white field of her cheeks) "that I met a gentleman, good, noble, and true, and—I loved him. But he was poor and of humble birth, and my father drove him from the Château when he asked for my hand. I was forbidden to breathe his name or to think of him any more.

"Then my father went even further, and descended to threats; but I, monsieur, am of the Montcours, and I, too, have my share of pride, so I determined that nothing should make me promise to forget my lover. At last my father, with tears in his eyes, told me that if I did not give up Alphonse unreservedly, he would take this last awful step. Oh, monsieur, save me, save me, for I vow that I am nearly driven into madness when I think of it."

"But—the physician?" I said, with a most uncomfortable lump in my throat at the sight of her grief.

"The physician?" she repeated scornfully. "Have you never found what money will do? I am so helpless; I have no friend, but you have a good face, monsieur, and I trust you."

At this moment the nurse entered hurriedly, and the conversation was of necessity interrupted.

Before entering the boudoir again in the afternoon, I wrote on a slip of paper the words: "What is his address?" This slip I folded up together with a small black-lead pencil into as little compass as possible, and

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contrived to slip it into Mademoiselle's hand while posing her for the afternoon's sitting. I gave her several intervals for rest during the progress of my work, and she employed the time well, for, as I posed her for the last time, I felt something pressed into my hand, and I knew that my inquiry had been answered.

When I had finished for the day, I hastened to my room, and eagerly examined the paper. On it were written the words: "M. Alphonse Perret, 26, Rue Lamartine, Paris." I at once sat down, scribbled a few lines to this address, and managed to get my letter posted without arousing suspicion.

But the hardest part of the task was to get Mademoiselle de Montcour out of what was virtually her prison. For hours I sat brooding over this problem, but no solution seemed forthcoming.

At last I resolved to go to bed, and, perhaps, in the morning some happy inspiration might come to me. But sleep felt a thousand miles away, and, putting on my dressing-gown, I sank into an easy chair, and gazed thoughtfully at the ceiling. Strangely enough, it was from the ceiling that I derived the idea which afterwards matured into a successful plan.

Almost above my head was a trap-door, opening, in all probability, on the leads. A thought flashed into my mind, and I soon had the dressing-table moved to the necessary position, and, placing a chair upon it, forced open the trap-door, hoisted myself up, and emerged upon the roof of the Château. It was of irregular construction, and I found progress rather difficult.

Keeping the geography of the house well in mind, I contrived to pilot myself to that part of the roof which I judged would cover Mademoiselle's apartments. Then I lay flat down, and, at the imminent risk of my neck, peered over the edge.

Taking a piece of string out of my pocket, I fastened my penknife to it, and lowered it down till it was opposite the window. I had to risk the chance of the nurse being in the same room, and I began swinging the knife slowly backwards and forwards.

Presently I heard it tapping against the window, at first gently, and then louder and louder. An anxious minute passed, and then I could hear the sound of the window being raised, and I saw a head looking out. It was too dark for me to distinguish the face, but Mademoiselle de Montcour's voice was not easily mistaken.

"Who is there?" she whispered.

"It is I, your friend," I answered softly.

"*Mon Dieu*, you will kill yourself, Monsieur! what can you be doing there?"

"Listen," I said, "to my plan for your escape. I have written to your lover telling him to be at the gate the night after next with three swift horses. At half-past eight you will hear my knife tapping at your window again. Then I will let down a rope to you, and we must get you pulled up here somehow or other, and the rest will be fairly easy, I fancy."

"Oh, Monsieur, how can I thank you? I feel free already, but—but—it is impossible for me to get to the roof. I should be killed."

"Oh, no, you wouldn't," I replied unceremoniously. "I'll see about that part of the business; so you must not worry about it."

"I cannot but trust in the only friend I possess," she answered, and was just about to say something else, when some sound alarmed her, and she hastily drew in her head and closed the window.

I made the best of my way back to my own room, and, tired out by my day's work, slept the sleep of the just.

Next day, I kept my eyes sharply about me, and was rewarded by seeing a long rope in one of the outhouses. I contrived, by wrapping the rope round my body, and buttoning my coat tightly above it, to get it smuggled up to my room. I now breathed more freely.

I held no further communication with Mademoiselle de Montcour, but was able to inform the Marquis that the portrait would be ready by the next evening.

The hours seemed to creep by with incredible slowness.

At last, however, the eventful night arrived, and early in the evening I handed over the portrait to the Marquis, and received my cheque.

Then I went to my bedroom, and locked myself in. How often I looked at my watch I cannot tell, but at length, to my great relief, I discovered that it was half-past eight o'clock. Taking the rope with me, I mounted once more upon the table and chair, and emerged upon the roof. Luckily there was enough light for my purpose, and I walked cautiously to my post above Mademoiselle's window. I cut the rope into two equal parts, and made a number of knots in one of the pieces. Then I firmly fastened the end of each rope to a chimney-stack immediately behind me. Lowering my penknife, I tapped at the window as before. Mademoiselle de Montcour opened it at once.

"Courage!" I said softly. "You will soon be safe. I will tell you just what you are to do, and I depend on your bravery as my chief assistance."

"Oh! I dare not, I dare not," she moaned. "I shall become giddy and fall."

"Nonsense, you will do nothing of the sort. It will be impossible for you to fall if you obey my orders. Come, Mademoiselle, shall it be said that a Montcour was afraid?"

"No," she said impulsively; "tell me what to do, and I will do it."

"Bravely spoken. I now lower two ropes to you, one of which is knotted. Fasten both firmly round your body, under the arms; seize the knotted rope and pull yourself up, hand over hand, with all your strength. I will pull the other rope, and we shall have you here in no time. Do you understand?"

"Yes," answered she.

My instructions were obeyed, and at my signal she mounted upon the window-ledge. I pulled with all my strength, bracing myself against a small battlement which bordered the roof. The brave girl assisted herself as well as she could, but the strain on my muscles was something fearful. The sweat poured down my face, my brain seemed on fire, and my eyes appeared to be wrenching themselves from their sockets.

At length my strength was fairly exhausted; but I clenched my teeth in despair and rage, and by one superhuman effort managed to drag Mademoiselle into safety. The instant the intolerable strain was relaxed I fell down, fainting, and it was not for some minutes that I was able to get on my feet again. Mademoiselle de Montcour, though feeling rather sick and giddy, was not much the worse for her adventure, so we were soon safe in my room. I produced my travelling flask, and we each had a small glass of brandy, which restored us to our natural selves.

The clock struck nine, so there was no time to be lost. We took off our boots, and crept stealthily along the passages and down the stairs towards the side entrance. Once I thought I heard a footstep behind us,

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but could see nobody. The stairs creaked in a most alarming fashion, and my heart was in my mouth half the time.

I opened the door, and Mademoiselle passed through, and at once ran towards the wall which surrounded the grounds of the Château. Taking the key, I was about to lock the door from the outside, when I felt a heavy hand laid upon my shoulder. I turned round, and was confronted by the huge form of the negro. His face wore a malicious grin. He seized me by the collar, and I closed with him desperately. I was lucky enough to get a firm hold, and we swayed to and fro; the negro exerting his tremendous strength in the endeavour to throw me, and I trying all I knew to keep my feet.

Fortunately, my antagonist disdained to shout for aid, so we struggled savagely together, the silence being only broken by our quick gasps for breath. I still felt the effects of my earlier struggle, and I knew that in another minute I should be thrown to the ground. The negro's grinning face was near my own, and I could feel his hot breath upon my neck, when suddenly I remembered a wrestling trick which I had once learnt from a Cumberland man. I had just strength enough to put it into practice, and the negro, taking in the snare, fell heavily to the ground, still encircling me in his arms.

As he fell, his head struck the stone step with great force, and, thick as his skull was, he was knocked insensible for some seconds. I raised myself from the ground, and ran as quickly as I could towards the wall. A man who was seated on the top called eagerly in French:

"This way, monsieur; the lady is already over."

By his assistance I was soon in the high road, where I found Mademoiselle de Montcour mounted on a spirited steed. The negro had evidently recovered, for we heard voices shouting, and it was evident that the alarm had been raised in the Château. We sprang quickly to the saddle, and dashed along the road at full speed, till the home of the Montcours was a dark speck in the distance.

When we reached Paris, M. Perret, for he it was, proposed that we should ride at once to the house of his mother, who would take charge of Mademoiselle, and they could then be married quietly in the morning.

So we parted, with many expressions of good-will and gratitude on the part of the happy pair. As for me—well, I had the cheque to assist in consoling me, and I went cheerfully through the silent streets to my lodgings, happy in this, that I had done my duty as "a gentleman, and a man of honour," to quote the words of the Marquis de Montcour.

W. Francis.

The Count's Wooing.

Count Adrien Mac Trevor, notwithstanding his Scotch name, was a Frenchman, and a Parisian at that. In the face of aristocratic prejudices, his grandfather had made a fortune in the iron trade. Adrien's father had continued the business, and had been able to leave to his son an enormous fortune, together with a spotless escutcheon.

The count had passed the first years of his life in the pursuit of pleasure; but now he had decided to marry and settle down. Desirable matches were not lacking, but courage was. "Women are such enigmas," he argued, "that one can never tell how the affair will turn out."

He was too intelligent to want a simpleton, and too honourable to want a coquette. The time for romance was over with him, and he desired to make his married life a charming reality. To sit opposite him at his fireside he pictured a gentle companion, refined and sincere, with enough elegance to make his home brilliant, and enough culture to make it respected. He asked a great deal, it is true, but as Fate had ever kindly smiled upon him, he still relied upon her.

This degenerate Parisian, while not believing in women, still believed in a woman. Beneath the surface of a social sea, swarming with life of all kinds, he knew there were pearls waiting to be discovered.

All the winter long Adrien had waltzed with blushing damsels, who responded to every smile bestowed upon them by this young man who was declared by mammas to be a "splendid catch!"

At a grand ball given by a Russian banker he had met Mdlle. Clary Bernard, a veritable "queen of hearts." She was a dainty blonde with brilliant black eyes, who dressed perfectly, mingled words from all languages in her conversation, and made a display of artistic tastes and aristocratic pretensions. She had a superb dowry, too, and it seemed as if Adrien need look no farther.

He hesitated, however, as his fastidious taste was not quite satisfied. Mdlle Clary prided herself on being a descendant of the great Samuel Bernard, and made this a pretext for covering her fans, her handkerchiefs, everything she owned in fact, with the coat-of-arms of the celebrated financier. She was thoroughly informed of everything pertaining to him, and she missed no opportunity of displaying her historical knowledge when she discussed the Regency.

Adrien wished the fans and historical notions at the bottom of the sea, along with Samuel and the Regency. He liked nobility, but not that sort of nobility. His good sense led him to repudiate everything not established on a solid basis.

At a charity concert given by the Duchess de Coutances, he was listlessly looking on when he chanced to hear some remarks exchanged by two young girls near him. What they said did not interest him, but the voice of one of them went straight to his heart. It was so clear, it was so correctly modulated that it suggested the music of a running brook. He turned and looked at the young girl whose melodious accents

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so aroused him. She did not seem to be very beautiful; she was tall, fair as a lily, with shining auburn hair twisted close to her shapely head, an oval face and eyes like Greuze's "Girl with a Broken Pitcher."

He inquired who she was and learnt that the angelic voice belonged to Mdlle. Marie d'Aspremont, one of the most aristocratic young ladies of the noble Faubourg.

A moderate fortune, no mother, a host of little brothers and sisters to whom she was devoted, a rigid education, a good heart and fair intellect; these were the facts he learnt concerning the young lady. He secured an introduction to the family.

The Marquise d'Aspremont invited him to her Thursday reception. At precisely nine o'clock he rang the bell at the entrance of the modest mansion where the old marquise resided.

A servant in English livery showed him into the drawing-room, which to his surprise he found furnished in true Louis XIV. style. Nothing was lacking. The Marquis, having been obliged to sell a family seat, had reproduced in his Parisian home the room of his grandfather, a colonel under Louis XIV. On the grey woodwork with white carvings, medallions by noted artists stood out in relief. The large easy chairs, with high backs of gilded wood, were covered with royal blue silk brocaded with silver. The sun-shaped clock with its Apollo borne on four marble pyramids had marked the hours, sad and joyous, for two centuries. X-shaped seats, covered with sapphire velvet, reminded one of the presentations of duchesses.

Tea was served on a Boule table crusted with copper and silver which was worthy of the great Condé.

Near the fire-place was seated a priest with violet hose who was addressed as "Monseigneur." Mme. la Marquise d'Aspremont sat facing him. She appeared to be a good enough person. though abrupt of speech. She wore a cap of old point lace surmounted by two immense grey butterflies, and a plum-coloured dress of China silk. She discussed all known topics without reserve and with that simplicity which calls "a spade a spade."

The company consisted of two other elderly ladies, an Academician, an old general, a young man from the provinces who had nothing to say, the grandnephews of the Marquise, her son, and Marie hemmed in by a crowd of youngsters. The lady who had introduced Adrien was the only Parisian present.

She had dined with the Marquise; and as soon as Adrien arrived she tried to entice Marie away from an exciting game with the children. The girl waited until it was ended, then reluctantly entered the circle of grown-up people.

It was absolutely impossible, however, to draw her into conversation. With her dress of grey wool, her white guimpe, and her great cross, she resembled a "tableau vivant" of a pupil of the Saint Cyr school. Timidity and embarrassment were stamped upon her countenance. She had the appearance of one who would like to sink out of sight. It puzzled Adrien to imagine what they could have told her about him to frighten her so.

Was she unsophisticated or stupid? A little of both, the young man decided. She was asked to play, and at once obeyed; but never was ear vexed by so many false notes. In the midst of this brilliant execution she suddenly stopped, saying:

"I fear I have forgotten the rest."

"It seems that you have forgotten it all, Marie," said her grandmother, "and that you forgot it before you began."

At this the girl rose and excused herself, saying that she would return when the children were asleep.

On passing out, she caught her feet in the scarf of one of the ladies, picked it up awkwardly, and disappeared. Even her silvery voice had changed, and Adrien no longer felt the spell of its music. As may be readily imagined, she was seen no more that evening.

The next night Adrien danced several times with Mdlle. Clary Bernard, took a flower from her bouquet, and saw, as in a dream, the crest of the great Samuel on her fan. The day after he called on the friend who wished to see him marry the descendant of the old nobility, thanked her for the intended honour, but also informed her that he needed a little more brilliancy in his abode.

"I do not pretend that Marie is a Mme. de Sévigne, but you should not judge of her intelligence by a single interview. I believe that if you were married to her you would never regret it. Call again and give her a fair trial."

"Thanks, but a life trial would be too long."

"Well, give her a fortnight's grace. It must not be said that you refused her on account of a nocturne badly played and a scarf awkwardly picked up."

Against his will, Count Mac Trevor went to the Marquise's the following Thursday. The same experience awaited him, no music this time, no awkwardness, but the same inexplicable silence.

The Marquise and her friends filled the evening with conversation on two equally edifying topics: the corruption of the age and genealogies.

"A young girl must be kept a child," repeated the dowager, "else she will not be worthy of becoming a woman."

Marie broke the silence which enveloped her only to ask Adrien to buy tickets for a charity fête in which she was to take part.

On returning home, he found a perfumed envelope containing tickets for the same fête, where Mdlle. Clary Bernard was also to shine. Decidedly, matters were growing interesting! Adrien could well understand the fair Bernard would be charming, but how about the little girl in the grey gown?

* * * * *

The gaiety of the fête was at its height when Count Mac Trevor entered the grounds where it was held.

The trees were hung with many-coloured lanterns, which shed their soft rays on the happy crowd. The military band, the joyous shouts of children, the creaking wheels of fortune, the eloquence of Punch and Judy, the gay chatter, all made parts of a symphony round him; and with a blonde marquise in heliotrope selling American beverages on one side, and a duchess offering him flowers on the other, Adrien found it no easy task to make his way about.

Called here by a smile, detained there by a pair of lovely eyes, he at last reached a "tombola" where a foreign princess was chatting with true Parisian wit.

Suddenly a shrill voice said close behind him.

"A cigar, sir?"

Turning, he recognised the triumphant Clary in the garb of a shepherdess; white gauze spotted with red, a large hat trimmed with white plumes and red pompons, a long sash of floating ribbons, a silver chatelaine sus-

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pended from her girdle, and a little apron trimmed with dainty lace.

Adrien gave a hundred francs for a cigar and followed the fair merchant.

She offered her wares right and left, all the while rebuking him for his tardiness.

He looked at her with some perplexity. She did not quite come up to his expectations.

Something in her manner, the coquettish tossing of her head, betrayed an affectation which jarred on her admirer's artistic nature. Then the little forced laugh that took the place of words displeased him. That silly laugh betrayed the embarrassment of vanity seeking in an empty brain for ideas, and finding nothing.

Just then Adrien found himself near a wheel of fortune behind which was the friend who had introduced him to Mdlle. d'Aspremont. Marie was with her.

The girl's simple toilette consisted of a skirt of white woollen stuff, a high white bodice embroidered with silver, the high collar and sleeves trimmed after the Valois fashion. A toque of white straw, trimmed with great blue wings, completed the resemblance to a maid of honour of the court of Charles IX.

"Does one win every time, mademoiselle?"

The silvery voice said so many appropriate and pleasing things in reply that Adrian stood rooted to the spot in astonishment. Gold pieces fell like drops of rain in the little platter. In the excitement of her charitable endeavours the girl was no longer recognisable. The woman was foreshadowed, and such a woman! The blue-bird had broken its shell and was already spreading its wing for flight!

Adrien had drawn back, fearing lest his presence might silence this babbling brook.

When she at last noticed a gentleman near her wheel she said without a trace of embarrassment:

"And for you, sir, shall it be green, red, or blue?"

"Does one win every time?"

"Certainly, sir. Anything you wish! Even he who loses, wins, you see."

"I would prefer one of your roses."

"But they are very dear."

"How much?"

"Just as much as you are willing to give."

"They are dear, that is true, but no amount is too great to pay for your smile!"

And Adrien emptied his purse into the platter.

A scarlet flush spread over her sweet face and she could only murmur:

"Thanks!"

* * * * *

Adrien married Marie.

During their wanderings in Italy, as he listened to her appreciative discussion of works of art, the wealth of information possessed by the quiet girl astonished him!

Kissing her little hand he exclaimed:

"To think that I believed you stupid!"

"Oh, you see, in our circle, girls are taught not to talk. They fill our minds with treasures, then lock them up and leave it to a husband to find the secret of the lock."

"It seems that the key was found at the charity fête."

"That was because I saw you and sent some one to aid you."

"Who?"

"Love."

JEAN DOMBEY.

The June Pearson's.

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THE RIVAL QUEENS.

A TALE OF OLD FRANCE RETOLD FROM THE FRENCH BY MARY FERMOR

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

CHAPTER XXV.

Mahmoud-el-Reis Keeps his Promise.

"To the Castle of Étampes!" shouted Antoine Cadocu who had, with small ceremony, hoisted Madame Agnes up into the saddle in front of him. Without further delay they started off, accompanied by an escort of twelve Free-Lances, who carried with them, as a prisoner, the crafty clerk, Maître Samson. They crossed the river by the ferry that had brought back the empty litter of poor Agnes the Fair, and made their way rapidly towards the forest.

Agnes de Méranie's heart was ready to burst with rage and mortification at the ignominious way in which she had been deprived of her expected triumph, but she recognised her master in the rough soldier whose prisoner she evidently was, and hoped by a semblance of submission to temporise till an opportunity for vengeance should offer itself to her.

"The Castle of Étampes belongs to Lord Amaury Montruel, does it not?" she asked, when she heard their destination.

"Amaury Montruel is dead, and the castle belongs to Captain Antoine Cadocu," was the answer; which made her hopes fall considerably lower, though she kept her own counsel, and the darkness concealed the hot burning tears that rose to her eyes.

"To the Castle of Étampes!" shouted Antoine Cadocu.

The clocks of the city were striking the first stroke of midnight, and the solemn Mass was about to begin.

The tumult and excitement caused by the abduction of Madame Agnes, and the apparently accidental death of Amaury Montruel, had drawn off the attention of the crowd from recent arrivals in the Cathedral; but when people had once more time to look round, a striking pair was found in the vicinity of the King. One was a woman, closely veiled, but wearing a crown and royal, gold-embroidered mantle. Her companion was a man dressed in the full richness of a magnificent Saracen costume.

As soon as they noticed her, Albret, Eric and Eve all left their places and hurried to her side, forgetful of all else than that they saw her whom they had begun to mourn as dead.

The Saracen advanced leading Ingeburge by the hand, and bowing low before Philip Augustus, said in a clear voice:

"The hour of midnight is striking, King, and I alone survive of the nine assassins who were pledged to take your life. Now fulfil your promise, as I have fulfilled mine."

The King advanced and took the trembling hand of Ingeburge from that of the Saracen, and as he raised her veil a shout of jubilation rang through the building, for they recognised the fair face and delicate beauty of the long lost Queen.

Philip bent down and kissed her forehead tenderly, and if his conscience smote him for this tardy reparation, his heart was full of thankfulness that she had been restored to him in time.

He then led her to the Altar, where they knelt side by side as he uttered the following words:

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The King took the trembling hand of Ingeburge.

"This is my wife in thy sight, O Lord God."

Then rising, they turned to the people and he proclaimed solemnly.

"From henceforth love and reverence Ingeburge as your Queen."

The Lord Bishop of Orvietto, Legate of his Holiness Pope Innocent III., did not at all approve of this summary settlement of affairs in which he and his compeers were allowed no share. He was looking round in search of someone upon whom to vent his righteous indignation, when his eye fell upon the striking, and somewhat incongruous figure of Mahmoud-el-Reis. He strode towards him, saying haughtily:

"Infidel! How dare you defile this sacred edifice by your presence! What brings you here?"

"I came to seek instruction for Holy Baptism, and to abjure my former errors, Sir Legate," replied the Syrian, unabashed, and, it must be confessed, with decided satisfaction, as he saw the crestfallen way in which the proud Bishop retired to his seat, muttering:

"This must be inquired into. It is some profane joke, I fear!"

Though Ingeburge had been in some measure prepared for the sudden and happy change in her lot by the confident, if somewhat vague, assertions of the Syrian during the time she had been under his care, she felt so overwhelmed by this new-found joy, that the King almost feared she had suffered too much at his hands ever to shake off the effects of her long imprisonment, and the terrible experience on the last night of her stay at the Abbey St. Martin.

When, however, they had reached the Louvre after the long and trying ordeal, her spirits rose, and her eyes gleamed with their depth of love and tenderness, and when with gentle diffidence she would have thanked her lord for this realisation of her dearest hopes, he took her in his arms and said with deep emotion:

"How can I ever atone for all you have suffered at my hands? Your countrymen rightly call you 'Angel' and you have been my guardian angel. I owe my life to you, and, perchance, my soul's welfare. If Heaven will spare me that life, I swear it shall be devoted to making you forget the dreary past."

Within the next few days the Council released the kingdom from the Interdict, Philip Augustus was publicly reconciled to the Church and his marriage with Queen Ingeburge ratified at a service of general thanksgiving. Mahmoud-el-Reis was received as a catechumen by Bishop Maurice de Sully, who was thus compensated by the exchange of a living stone for the spiritual temple in place of the lifeless image that had fulfilled so gruesome a destiny.

Albret and Eve were married soon after, and both retained their places in the love and confidence of the royal pair. Eric returned to his northern home after seeing his little sister and Queen Angel secure in their well-deserved happiness.

Maître Samson paid the price for his double dealing with his ill-favoured head the day after his master had come by his awful end, for King Philip thought it advisable to dispense with the services of even so able and subtle an agent, in consideration of his tendency to try and serve two masters.

State affairs did not suffer the reunited King and Queen to remain long together, for he had to take the field against his ever-turbulent enemy John of England, and in this campaign he was again accompanied by Captain Antoine Cadocu, who performed acts of prowess and valour that would have done credit to our own King Richard himself.

During his absence he left Madame Agnes under the care of "La Fontanelle," whose experience in the management of her sex he had reason to admire. The lot of the deposed favourite was a very bitter one. Upon her arrival at the Castle of Etampes she had been received by Catherine, Alix and Jeanne, her three successful rivals in the nocturnal competition at the St. Landry tavern, and they had promptly

He took her in his arms.

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He kissed it reverently.

taken possession of the jewels and rich clothing that she had donned so proudly that morning, giving her in exchange some left-off garments of their own. She was then bidden to wait on her new master at his supper, and when she showed signs of resistance, he found summary means of reducing her to submission. She was kept in close confinement, and never allowed to move without one of the three attendant maidens at her side. It may safely be assumed that they lost no opportunity of humiliating and torturing the wretched woman who had once stood so far above them. The bitterest drop in her cup was the knowledge of her hated rival's restoration and the constant reports that reached her of Ingeburge's growing popularity. Had it not been that she still cherished plans of revenge, she would have taken her own life rather than submit to the hourly indignities she had to endure.

Cadocu had told her that the King was fully aware both of her visit to him at the tavern and of her intrigues with Amaury Montruel, so that she knew he would never forgive the deceit she had practised upon him. Appeal to such a one was worse than useless. Montruel, her slave and plaything, was dead—as she had more than once wished him—but now she reviled the ill-fate that had removed the one man who would have stood by her in her disgrace. No thought of sorrow or pity for his untimely end ever crossed her mind, she only felt a sense of mad, selfish anger at losing her forbearing and ever ready friend, just at a time when she had no one to replace him.

How she longed, too, for those costly pearls she had wasted upon that faithless Mahmoud-el-Reis, who, instead of killing her rival, had worked the destruction of those who had employed him! If she only had had money or jewels she might have bribed someone to let her out of this ghostly castle, haunted by the vision of her murdered namesake who had thought to be its mistress, and of the man who had received it as a token of affection from the King he had so basely betrayed.

Her dazzling beauty faded, and her companions did not fail to tell her so; the fires of hatred and revenge burnt within her till she seemed like a shadow of her former self. With hollow cheeks and sunken eyes she wandered restlessly about, or sat moodily gnawing her nails and refusing either to speak or eat.

The war, or rather the campaign, was brought to a successful termination, and Philip Augustus went with his Queen Ingeburge in state to Nôtre Dame to return thanks for his safe home-coming. Just as the Queen descended from her litter, a woman, dressed in the ragged remains of tawdry finery, darted forward with an uplifted knife in one hand ready to strike Ingeburge as she passed. The King stepped between them, knocked the weapon from the woman's wasted hand, and bade his guards seize her.

With a cry of impotent rage she fastened herself upon his arm, saying wildly:

"Have you forgotten your wife, Agnes de Méranie? A malediction upon that white-faced witch who stole you from me! She never loved you as I did, and she shall not live to enjoy what I——"

Her sentence was never finished, for the mob had closed in at the sound of her name, and, before the guards could secure her, she had fallen a victim to the violence of the populace.

Cadocu expressed the deepest regret that she should have thus thrust herself upon his royal master, but explained that for some time past she had been much more docile, and in apparently such bad health, that he had ordered their vigilance to be relaxed. He now understood how deep had been her duplicity, but felt a grim satisfaction in the knowledge that she had but hastened her own end by it.

The day after this tragic episode Mahmoud-el-Reis, to call him by his old familiar name, was baptised in Nôtre Dame by Bishop Maurice de Sully in the presence of the King and Queen. After the ceremony he accompanied them back to the Louvre, and took leave of the many friends he had made at court, including the Queen's private chaplain, good Prior Anselm, as well as Eve and Albret, whose dread and hatred had speedily been turned into love and admiration when they knew the noble part he had played on behalf of Queen Angel.

The King and Ingeburge accompanied him to the door, where his magnificent Arab was in charge of the two black slaves.

Having taken leave of Philip Augustus, who would even now have persuaded him to remain amongst them, he turned to Ingeburge. With tears in her eyes she held out her hand to him.

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He kissed it reverently and pressed it to his heart for some seconds. His full, rich voice trembled slightly as he said:

"Adieu, Queen! I leave you happy. God grant you may long continue so! I go now to Dilah, your twin soul, to teach her the lesson that you have taught me. Pray for us that we may both stand fast, and for our souls, that they may rest in peace."

He turned away, and with one more look at the woman who had so strangely affected his destiny, he dashed over the draw-bridge and was soon lost in a cloud of dust.

"There goes one of the noblest men that ever breathed," said Philip gravely; to which Ingeburge added in a low voice:

"And it is to him, under Heaven, that we owe our happiness, my dear lord. Would that his own had not been sacrificed to procure it!"

* * * * *

Months passed and there came news of a hideous tragedy in the Far East. Mahmoud-el-Reis, faithful to the last, returned and accomplished his self-imposed mission. Before presenting himself to the authorities, he sought out Dilah in the shady groves of Pur, and told her the strange story of his broken vow, and of the wondrous truths he had learnt from the lips of her twin soul. His love and burning zeal, now transferred with increased intensity to his new-found faith, soon worked as he desired upon the gentle heart of Dilah, and when she had declared herself willing to stand by his side in death, as she had hoped to do in life, he signed her brow with the cross and they went forth together.

Unflinchingly the two faithful hearts bore the double penalty accorded to their two-fold crime of apostasy and treachery.

Their torture was extended to twenty-four hours instead of twelve, and the only earthly consolation Mahmoud-el-Reis had in that terrible time, was the knowledge that the soul of his beloved had passed hence before the fangs of the tiger could reach her body.

THE END.

A Splendid New Serial Story, entitled "THE GLADIATOR; A Tale of Eastern Empire," will begin shortly.

AN OLD WOMAN'S LOVE.

THE Marquis Dizios, first secretary of the Spanish legation, was a man still in the prime of life, with great personal advantages and a most distinguished presence.

He was as popular socially as he was successful diplomatically.

No little informal dinner, indeed no festivity of any kind, large or small, was deemed complete without the presence of "that delightful Dizios."

Ladies in the most exclusive circles of fashion had lionised him to an extent that came near to making him hated by his own sex in the capital. Yet he never indulged in any flirtation or showed preference for any particular woman; and the smiles of the younger ladies failed to make the desired impression upon him.

He was dining at his club, one evening, with the only intimate friend he had made since his appointment.

A certain Arnold Hemingsen by name, an *attaché* of the Swedish legation; a charming fellow in his way, but the very opposite to Dizios. As they were finishing their coffee and lighting their cigars, the conversation turned upon women.

The Marquis' manner instantly changed, he grew cold and reserved, and merely answered in monosyllables.

Hemingsen generally respected his friend's peculiarity, although his interest had always been more or less piqued by the marquis' invariable taciturnity regarding the fair sex; to-night, however, he was in a more reckless mood than usual, whether it was owing to the exhilarating effects of an excellent meal, or to a generous absorption of the "rosy" to quote from Mr. Dick Swiveller's classic phraseology, I really could not say.

After staring at Dizios thoughtfully for a moment, while he turned his cigar carefully round between his lips and puffed a short white cloud into the air, he unburdened his mind by bluntly asking his friend how it happened that so popular a man as himself should never have found one lady fairer than the rest?

The marquis was more surprised than angered by his friend's crude curiosity, and only replied after a moment's hesitation.

"My dear Hemingsen," he said, "there is a story connected with my aversion to flirtation, in the ancient as well as in the modern sense of the word, which, if you care to hear it, will define my antipathy to that species of society sport better than any explanation I could offer you. It is rather long though, and some other time——"

"No, no," interrupted Hemingsen, whose face expressed the liveliest interest, "don't bother about its length. Let us hear it now."

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"Well," said the Spaniard, "this is what happened, and as the heroine of the one love affair of my life has been dead now for many years, I may, still with profound respect for her memory, tell you the story.

"I had been spending a few weeks of my leave, one summer, with my mother, in Spain, and as I was about to start for Paris, she begged me to make a stay at Poictiers in order to visit her dear friend, the Duchesse d'Ormont, who was living in her chateau not far from that town. She lived in great seclusion, owing to the death of her only daughter.

"I will not deny that the idea bored me immensely, but as I wished to please my mother above all things, I carefully concealed my annoyance, and vowed, at the same time, to make myself as agreeable as possible to her friend.

"My mother wrote the Duchesse of my approaching visit, and when I alighted from the train, I found a brake waiting to convey me to the castle; it was drawn by a pair of the most splendid thoroughbreds that I have ever seen, and I never wearied of admiring their action during the drive.

"The Duchesse received me at the foot of the grand stair-case. She was very simply dressed in the deepest mourning, without a single ornament of any kind to relieve its austerity save for one ring, a magnificent ruby which I noticed upon her finger as I raised it to my lips. To my surprise she blushed as I did so, but instantly controlling herself, she welcomed me in an almost regal fashion; indeed, I have never been more impressed by so curious a mixture of simplicity and grandeur.

"Perplexed by that curious blush, a sudden mischievous idea of paying a little court to the poor lady entered my foolish brain. I would show her, I thought, the same flattering attention which a young man would offer a young and beautiful woman of exalted rank whom he admired: that is to say, with a carefully blended mixture of deference and gallantry.

"For the first half hour our conversation never deviated from subjects relating to my mother, of whom the Duchesse seemed very fond, for she asked many questions concerning her health and her life in Spain; she thanked me, too, very graciously for coming so far out of my way to see her, and begged me to consider myself quite at home at the castle during my visit.

"'When you know the dinner hour your lesson will be learnt,' she said with a charming smile. 'Pray arrange your day to suit yourself, choose your own horses at your ease; the country round is celebrated for its views, and I am sure you will find many places of interest to visit before leaving.'

"I answered with energy that I had come to see her and her alone, and I begged her not to deprive me of her society for the few days I was to remain.

"She blushed again! And to hide her confusion gave her nephew (who, I had forgotten to mention, was present at my reception) instructions to escort me round the park and show me the lake and the flower gardens, of which, she added, she was very proud.

"The Duchesse, who was innately gracious, promptly consented to be my guide herself when I warmly urged her to grant me that favour, and donning a large hat, she led the way out upon the terrace. The view across the park was very fine.

"The velvety green lawns felt softer than Persian carpets beneath our feet, as we paced slowly along side by side under the spreading elm trees to the lake; the gentle breeze hardly rippled its placid surface as we followed the walk which ran round it; while the greedy swans glided hopefully along beside us, fluttering their wings and clapping with their bills—in other words begging us in 'swan talk' for some favour in the way of biscuits or bread-crumbs.

"I persevered of course, in my endeavours to entertain my hostess and finally succeeded in making her laugh; for up to that moment her demeanour had been grave, almost stern.

"As our promenade was drawing to a close and we were returning through the flower garden, we paused simultaneously before a beautiful jasmine in full bloom. After inhaling its fragrance for an instant I begged her very humbly and almost in a whisper to make me a buttonhole of the blossoms.

"'How capricious you are,' she returned smiling, while her supple fingers cleverly twisted a few leaves and buds into a little bunch which she placed in the lapel of my coat. 'That is my favourite flower, too,' she added, raising her sweet eyes to mine; but she dropped them again hurriedly as they met my gaze.

"Just what she read in my eyes, I do not know—admiration possibly, a tenderness of some sort, surely, to which she was unaccustomed. For I myself felt the magnetism as our glances crossed and we retraced our steps in silence.

"The following days were spent in a constant and ideal companionship. We drove about the country during the day and our evenings were passed upon the terrace, or in the great bow-window of the drawing-room, which overlooked the park.

"But our relations grew equivocal. I was dissatisfied with myself and my behaviour; and each day as it dawned, I vowed should end my visit.

"But I still lingered on. There was a fascination about our intercourse which was hard to resist.

"Although her hand had never pressed mine more warmly than on the day of my arrival, I felt that I had made an impression upon her never to be effaced and, alas! my conjecture proved only too true.

"I decided to leave the chateau one Sunday morning, while she was attending divine service in the beautiful chapel which formed the left wing of the castle. I had no heart to bid her farewell, so I left a note, excusing my abrupt departure and thanking her for the gracious hospitality which she had extended to me.

* * * * *

"One year from that day her body was found floating in the lovely lake round whose grassy margin she had strolled with me but a twelvemonth before!"

He paused and then went on hurriedly.

"In her will she left me as a keepsake the ruby ring which I have already mentioned."

"Ah!" murmured Hemingsen, "I have often admired it; indeed, it seems a part of you, for I have never seen you without it."

The marquis smiled sadly.

"Now you know, my dear Hemingsen," he said, "the story of my one love affair and my repugnance to any semblance of false sentiment!"

"But," interrupted his friend eagerly, "do you really think her love for you drove her to——?"

Dizios laid his hand heavily on the young man's arm.

"The Duchesse," he said, "was over sixty years old!"

Alice Henderson.

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MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THIS PAGE.

C. W.—The speed of transmission of overland telephone wires is at the rate of 16,000 miles a second. Where the wires are through cables under the sea the speed is not more than 6,020 miles a second.

H. wants to know if it is permissible for a town council to choose a mayor outside their own body.———Certainly, and it is very often done.

With reference to a paragraph that appeared on this page a week or two ago regarding the cost of clothing our soldiers and sailors, One of the Sailors writes to say that although Tommy Atkins gets all his clothes provided for him by the country, the sailors have to pay for their own. A sailor has to keep his kit up to the uniform standard in quality and quantity, which comprises about forty items. Should E. S. or any other reader wish to know the cost of these, O. O. T. S. will be glad to supply them with it.

Contango.—Mr. Edison, the American inventor, is not blind, as your friend states. It is true that he is deaf, however, and this calamity was caused by a railway porter having lifted him up by the ears when a boy.

Author.—The biggest fortune ever made by a man solely by his pen was the quarter of a million made by Sir Walter Scott, while probably the single work which brought in the largest sum for its author was Monsieur Daudet's "Sapho," for which he received £40,000.

B. B.—Only pure spring water is absolutely free from alcohol. River, sea, and snow-water all contain more or less.

Walter is in an unenviable position. To use his own words, he is "madly in love with a beautiful girl." Unfortunately, his affection is not returned in the same degree, although the young lady admits that she "likes him," but not sufficiently to become his wife. He continues to press his suit on the grounds that his own devotion will in the end win hers after marriage. The lady in question does not agree with him in this theory, and declines to risk it. Being of a persevering disposition, he asks if we cannot say something which would induce her to change her mind. ———I am afraid not, Walter. In our opinion the lady is quite right; it would be an exceedingly risky thing to do. Of course, it is just possible that such a marriage would turn out happily, but the chances are against it.

G. C. H.—It is by no means an unusual thing for a sovereign never to go through the ceremony of coronation. Neither the Emperor of Germany, the King of Italy, the present and late Kings of Spain, the King of Bavaria, nor the King of Saxony have ever been crowned.

W. H.—The ostrich is the swiftest moving animal on the face of the earth; it has been known to travel at the rate of a mile a minute, a speed equal to that of our fastest trains.

Whiskers writes: "Do you consider a beard an advantage or disadvantage in business?"———The present is undoubtedly an age of young men. In every department of life it is the young men who are most in evidence. It would appear then to be rather a disadvantage than otherwise to be the possessor of a beard, for it invariably makes a man look several years older than his clean-shaven contemporaries, and he is therefore apt to be pushed aside as being less smart than they are. But after all, it cannot make much difference in the long run, for if a man has his wits about him, the fact will assert itself, be he clean shaven or the owner of a beard.

Populous.—At the beginning of the present century there were only twenty-one towns in Europe with a population of more than 100,000.

Six Footer asks: "Where are the tallest men in Great Britain to be found?"———From statistics it appears that the inhabitants of Galloway are on an average taller than the rest of their countrymen; the average height in that part being 5ft. 10½in., without shoes. The average for the whole of England being only 5ft. 6⅔in.

Gardener wants to know why orchids command such fancy prices.——— Probably because their culture is a fashionable craze, together with the existing mania for securing new and rare varieties.

Canary.—The original inhabitants of the Canary Islands have completely disappeared; that is the result of contact with Spanish civilisation. Their mummies are to be found hidden away in holes that honeycomb the mountains. Among the people of that extinct race were so-called communities of women; they lived in an agglomeration of cells, after the manner of the early Christians of Egypt. The remains of one of the singular convents exist on the slope of a mountain on the Grand Canary; there are 300 cells cut out of the solid rock, and on such a slope that only a mountaineer can reach them.

H. M.—The crown of the King of Roumania is made of metal from the cannon captured by the Roumanians at Plevna in 1877.

C. H. L. asks: "When were the first lucifer matches made?"———In the year 1829. These matches, however, were not lit by striking, the wooden splits were headed with a composition of sulphur, sugar and chlorate of potash. They had to be dipped into fuming sulphuric acid to light them; the acid was kept on asbestos in a bottle. Striking matches first made their appearance in 1832, and were lighted by rubbing their heads on sandpaper, usually by drawing them sharply through a fold of the paper between the finger and thumb.

C. Y.—The only Lady Mayoress entitled to wear a chain of office is the wife of the Lord Mayor of York.

Waters writes: "It would interest me greatly if you could give me some idea of the advance our Navy has made since the time of the Spanish Armada."———At the time of the Spanish Armada our very largest vessel was not more than 1,000 tons, and required a crew of 500 men, whereas a vessel to-day of 15,000 tons only requires an additional 250. In 1598 the most popular form of cannon was the "culverin," weighing about two tons, and capable of firing a fifteen-pound shot every ten or twelve minutes, whereas nowadays a modern gun cannon is capable of discharging seven or eight tons of metal every minute. In fact, the only point of resemblance between the fleet of 1598 and the fleet of 1898 is that both are manned with British sailors.

W. W.—The ordinary fog as distinguished from the "London particular" is caused by the condensation of atmospheric vapour, owing to the presence of cold. Fogs, therefore, more frequently occur at those seasons of the year when there is the greatest variation of temperature during the day. In large cities, such as London, these white mists become impregnated with smoke and assume the pea-soup colour.

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